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# The role of discourse topic and proximity for demonstratives in German and Russian\*

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This article discusses the textual functions of demonstratives in German and Russian in terms of ‘discourse topicality’ and ‘proximity’, thus covering a broad range of referential phenomena within a unified approach. It shows that — in spite of important grammatical differences between German and Russian — anaphoric and deictic uses of demonstratives are ruled by the same principles in both languages.

**Keywords:** demonstratives, anaphora, deixis, German/Russian

## 1. Introduction: Demonstratives in German and Russian

Demonstratives, like personal pronouns, are textual means of coherence within the manifold field of ‘domain-bound reference’, i.e. referential relations that have to be established dependent on explicit or implicit features of the linguistic or extra-linguistic context. An analysis of demonstratives in terms of domain-bound reference allows us to analyse deixis (reference resolution depending on non-textual features of the situation/context) and anaphora (reference resolution depending on textual features) in a uniform way (cf. Consten 2003; 2004).

In contrast to personal pronouns, demonstratives are referential means with stronger “power” due to their etymological roots as expressions of immediate physical pointing; cf. Windisch (1869) and Brugmann (1904), whose concept of a scale of “power of pointing” seems to be (tacitly) the base for several modern theories like Salience Theory, Accessibility Theory and Centering Theory (e.g. Gundel 1996, Ariel 1990, Grosz et al. 1995 and Bosch et al. 2007). In these approaches, demonstratives match with low-accessible referents within a hierarchy ranking different lexical means on a linear scale of accessibility of referents (cf. 2.1).

We consider demonstratives as a subclass of means for marking definiteness. The comparison of Russian and German shows promise since, unlike German,

Russian does not have a grammaticalized category of definiteness, and thus lacks articles in the proper sense like German *der/die/das* (cf. Späth 2006), so that differences in the use of demonstrative markers of definiteness might be expected. However, these languages feature lexical forms that correspond to different degrees of demonstrativity, which can be used either as pronouns or as determiners. The primary aim of this paper is to point out the similarities both languages show in demonstrative reference, thus suggesting some stable referential functions demonstratives have across (these) languages. The lexemes we are concerned with are listed in Table 1. We discuss pronominal and determiner use in a unified approach, when possible.

**Table 1.** German and Russian demonstratives

German			Russian			
<i>pers. pron.</i>	<i>dem. pron. (weak)</i>	<i>demonstr. pron. (strong)</i>	<i>pers. pron.</i>	<i>demonstr. pron. (strong)</i>		
	<i>determiners</i>	<i>dem. determiners</i>		<i>dem. determiners</i>		
<i>er/sie/es</i>	<i>der/die/das</i>	<i>dieser/-e/-(es)</i> <sup>a</sup>	<i>jener/-e/-es</i>	<i>on/ona/ono</i>	<i>étot/èta/ èto</i>	<i>tot/ta/to</i>
he, she, it	this / the	this	that	he, she, it	this (one) / the	that (one) / the

<sup>a</sup> Stressed *dér/díe/dás* (pronouns as well as determiners) seem to be equivalent to the strong demonstratives *dieser/diese/dieses*; however, see (7). For a critical assessment of this topic, see Himmelmann (1997:49–62), who provides detailed evidence from West German dialects.

In the following, we use the term ‘demonstrative’ mainly referring to the strong demonstratives in German and Russian,<sup>1</sup> as these are the forms existing in both languages. Our paper is organized as follows: in Section 2, we will first briefly present existing analyses of demonstrative anaphoric reference. We will show that these have empirical as well as theoretical drawbacks, the most important being that different functions of demonstratives are accounted for without assuming any relations between them. We will propose an analysis which brings together different functions of demonstratives in a hierarchy of features allowing for demonstrativity. In Section 3, we will give an overview of phenomena of demonstrative reference, including nominal and complex anaphora as well as deixis. We show that in both German and Russian demonstrative reference is used either for non-topical referents or for referents that are ‘near’ in the sense of spatial or cognitive proximity. In Section 4, we show exactly how (non-)topicality and proximity interact to allow or disallow demonstrative reference. We propose a hierarchy of features allowing for demonstrativity that is valid for both German and Russian. Finally,

in Section 5, we conclude that demonstrativity in both languages is on the whole ruled by the same cognitive principles.

## 2. Features allowing for demonstrativity: Topicality and proximity

In this section, we discuss two referential features that are typically expressed with demonstrative NPs. The first one, non-topicality, is a property referents gain at the level of discourse representation (cf. 2.3.1). Our notion of the second feature allowing for demonstrative reference, proximity, unifies physical properties of referents as discussed with spatial deixis and cognitive ones that reflect the speaker's attitude towards the things s/he speaks about (2.3.2). These features have of course been discussed before (cf. 2.1), but there are serious problems in matching them in order to account for demonstrativity in natural discourse (cf. 2.2).

### 2.1 Present notions of demonstrativity

In text-linguistic and semantic research, the functions of demonstrative reference are described in terms of non-topicality (i) or within the system of spatial or textual deixis (ii). Cognitive approaches accounting for demonstrative marking of empathy (iii) are quite rare.

(i) In contrast to personal pronouns, which serve as means of thematic continuity, demonstratives are assumed to serve the “first identification” of the referent (*Leitfaden* 1968, Švedova et al. 1982, Gladrow 1998), which corresponds primarily to the deictic use of the demonstratives; in other words, demonstratives evoke a “new orientation of the addressee” (Zifonun et al. 1997:555f) or refer to referents that are not yet discourse topics (in the sense of not being the most salient nominal entity in the discourse; cf. Bosch et al. 2007). In general, such referents are established as discourse topics by demonstrative reference.

These discourse-based notions are (explicitly or implicitly) intended to include immediate physical deictic reference which is often regarded as being “the most basic function of demonstratives” (Diessel 1999:2). The coincidence of non-topicality and deixis obviously results from the identification of the referential features “not yet known to the hearer” and “outside of discourse in the surrounding situation” (Diessel 1999:2).<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, a typical situation for the utterance of (1) is that the referent is accessible by visual deixis, but not pre-mentioned. The referent is “put into the universe of discourse” by the demonstrative (Lyons 1979:102; cf. Himmelmann 1997:82f)

- (1) *Siehst Du diesen Mann dort?*<sup>3</sup>  
 see you **this man** there  
 “Do you see this man over there?”

(ii) In discourse deictic approaches, the function of demonstratives is described analogously to spatial or temporal deixis (see 2.3.2): just like spatial deictics pointing to a near referent (see 3.1.1), demonstratives in a text are assumed to “point from right to left in the textual space” (Zifonun et al. 1997:558). In this respect demonstratives also differ from personal pronouns: personal pronouns operate in the text as a whole, i.e. linear distance to the antecedent is irrelevant in resolving them; cf. (2), where the demonstrative *dieser* refers to the spatially nearest referent<sub>2</sub>, whereas the personal pronoun *ihn* refers to referent<sub>1</sub>:

- (2) *Patrick<sub>1</sub> küsste Klaus<sub>2</sub> und dann umarmte dieser<sub>2</sub> ihn<sub>1</sub>.*  
 Patrick<sub>1</sub> kissed Klaus<sub>2</sub> and then embraced **that.one**<sub>2</sub> him<sub>1</sub>  
 “Patrick<sub>1</sub> kissed Klaus<sub>2</sub> and then HE<sub>2</sub> embraced HIM<sub>1</sub>.”<sup>4</sup>

(iii) Besides the discourse-based and spatially-based functions discussed in (i) and (ii) above, there is a kind of affective function of demonstratives, namely the marking of the speaker’s close emphatical attitude towards the referent (Himmelman 1997:61 for German; Padučeva 1982, Weiss 1988 for Russian). In (3) we are dealing with a common way of expressing a negative evaluation by mere demonstrativity, i.e. without an explicit marking by adjectives within the NP:

- (3) *Diese Politiker sind doch alle korrupt!*  
**these politicians** are still all corrupt  
 “All those politicians are corrupt, aren’t they?”

In 2.3.2 we will show that these cases can be subsumed under the feature of ‘near reference’ discussed in (ii).

## 2.2 Problems of existing approaches

The approaches discussed above, however, cannot explain some data (both for Russian and German), e.g.:

(i) There is demonstrative continuation of discourse-topical referents as in (4), obviously motivated by emotional emphasis (see 2.1 (iii)), which Zifonun et al. (1997:558–560) describe as “new orientation to the same referent”. This inconsistent notion (why do speakers have to provide a new orientation if the referent is topical anyway?) results from a one-dimensional account that is only based on a topic/non-topic distinction.

- (4) *Wer zweifelt noch an der Schuld dieser Angeklagten?*  
 who doubts yet at the guilt [this accused]<sub>gen.fem</sub>  
*diese Frau hat ihren Mann grausam ermordet.*  
 this woman has her husband cruelly murdered  
*Diese Frau hat einen Mord begangen,*  
 this woman has a murder committed  
*damit sie an das Vermögen ihres Gatten kommen konnte.*  
 so-that she at the assets [her spouse]<sub>gen</sub> achieve was-able-to  
 (cf. Consten 2004:9)  
 “Who could be in doubt about the guilt of the accused? This woman has  
 cruelly murdered her husband. This woman has committed a murder in  
 order to get her husband’s fortune.”

(ii) Demonstrative use of indirect anaphors is very restricted although their referents are non-topical (see 3.2.3).

In this paper, we will discuss these problems by accounting for a dependency between discourse topicality (see 2.1 (i)), spatio-deictic proximity (see 2.1 (ii)) and cognitive proximity (see 2.1 (iii)). These concepts are defined in Section 2.3.

## 2.3 A proposal in terms of topicality and proximity

### 2.3.1 *Discourse topicality*

We understand topicality as a discourse phenomenon and define discourse topicality (DT-ity) as a property of a certain discourse referent a given discourse segment is about.<sup>5</sup> A discourse segment is understood intuitively as a relatively small, thematically contiguous part of discourse. We assume that in a given segment there is only one topical referent in the sense of DT-ity, that we call discourse topic (DT) (cf. Averintseva-Klisch 2007).

### 2.3.2 *Proximity*

Our notion of proximity is intended to cover the following cases:

(i) Reference to objects that are spatially near. This includes spatial deictic proximity as well as anaphoric proximity. Both deictic and anaphoric proximity can be subsumed under the term ‘physical proximity’. As for deictic reference, ‘proximity’ can be understood in the literal sense of the term as “short spatial distance between the speaker and the intended referent”, sometimes denoting a contrast to another, more distant referent. This concept can be applied to anaphora if text/discourse is considered to be analogous to physical space; text/discourse is then analysed as a spatially structured unit in the case of written text and as a temporally structured unit in the case of oral discourse (cf. Lenz 1997:61–66). Spatial proximity thus means a short distance between anaphor and antecedent.

(ii) Reference to objects the speaker wishes to mark as ‘near’ in an emotive sense of the term (‘cognitive proximity’).<sup>6</sup> Here the use of demonstrative NPs does not result from spatial proximity but from the speaker’s emotional involvement with his topic, which is a common kind of cognitive proximity. Specifying emotional attitudes is only one kind of cognitive proximity. In 3.2.3, we will introduce another kind of proximity that is concerned with epistemic levels (see (18)–(21) below).

### 3. Phenomena of demonstrative reference

Like other deictically or anaphorically used expressions, demonstratives are a means of domain-bound reference — the concepts of proximity and DT-ity characterise different discourse functions dependent on the domain of reference, deixis operating in a non-textual domain, anaphora in the textual domain.

#### 3.1 Deixis

##### 3.1.1 Direct deixis

With direct deixis, German and Russian demonstratives are used to refer to distant versus near referents (here, proximity is defined in terms of physical space), as the opposition *dieses* – *jenes* in German<sup>7</sup> and *étot* – *tot* in Russian shows; see (5) and (6):<sup>8</sup>

- (5) *Dieses Café* (wo wir sind) gefällt mir besser als *jenes dort drüben*  
 this café<sub>1</sub> (where we are) like I better than that<sub>2</sub> there over  
*auf der anderen Straßenseite.*  
 at the other roadside  
 “I like this café<sub>1</sub> (where we are) better than that one<sub>2</sub> over the road.”

Here, the use of *dieses* versus *jenes* is deictically motivated with respect to the place of utterance (denoted by *dies*-+ N) in contrast to another place (denoted by *jen*-).

- (6) [...] *Dorodnyx vyšel iz-za kustov na bereg, k samoj reke.*  
 Dorodnyx came-out from-behind bushes to Ø shore<sub>1</sub> to itself river  
*On vpolgolosa otdaval prikazaniya [...] gotovit’sja k brosku na tot bereg.*  
 he in.a.low.voice gave orders to.prepare to rush to that shore<sub>2</sub>  
 (Tübinger Russische Korpora)  
 “Dorodnyx came from behind the bushes to the shore<sub>1</sub>, and stayed near the water. In a low voice he gave orders to prepare an attack on the other (lit: that) shore<sub>2</sub>.”

Here, the shore the protagonist is standing upon is referred to with a bare noun, while the other one, i.e. the distant shore, is referred to with *tot* N.

### 3.1.2 Indirect deixis

By indirect deixis we understand deictic reference where the referent cannot be seen directly but can be found indirectly by using visual features of the current discourse space (so-called anchors; cf. Consten 2003; 2004; 2007). While *dies-* in German and *étot/tot* in Russian are the most typical means of direct deixis, they are very constrained with indirect deixis; cf. (7) and (8):

(7) *Ist dér / \*dieser nicht da?* (showing towards an empty office)<sup>9</sup>  
is hé<sub>dem</sub> / \*this.one not there

(8) *Netu ego / ??étogo / \*togo?* (same context)  
is.not.there he / ??this.one / \*that.one?  
“He isn’t in, is he?”

With indirect deixis, no immediate pointing to the referent is possible. This might explain why demonstratives are excluded. Another reason for non-demonstrativity here is linked to the different levels of reality the corresponding referents are situated at: referents of indirect deictics are absent while their respective anchors are physically present, hence the referent a speaker wants to denote (in (7) and (8): a person) and the referent a speaker points at (an office) are at different levels of reality. Thus, the feature of cognitive proximity is not given with indirect deixis. In 3.2.3 we will discuss examples of indirect anaphora where levels of reality (more generally: epistemic levels) also serve as features relevant for demonstrativity: the anchor referent and the referent of the anaphor have to be at the same level to allow for a demonstrative anaphor (cf. (18)–(21)).

However, with lexical NPs as indirect deictics, demonstratives are possible, but only in order to give an emotive, mostly negative, evaluation of the referent, which is another instantiation of cognitive proximity:

(9) *Ist dieser Idiot / \*dieser Mitarbeiter nicht da?* (same context as (7)).  
is this idiot / \*this employee not there  
“That idiot / That employee isn’t in, is he?”

In these cases, cognitive proximity turns out to be the predominant feature allowing for demonstratives; see (27) and (28) for analogous indirect anaphoric examples.



### 3.2 Anaphora

#### 3.2.1 Direct nominal anaphors

As with deixis, the concept of proximity can be applied in order to explain anaphoric demonstrativity. However, DT-ity is crucial for anaphors as well. Both features interplay in the following way with nominal anaphors: non-DT, but ‘near’ antecedents in textual space prefer demonstratives, while DTs with any antecedent position prefer personal pronouns.

- (10) *Odnazhdy papa privel v dom kakogo-to čeloveka, byl, naverno, god 1964-j, papa ispolnjal svoi pesni. I etot čelovek vsë vremja sprašival [...]*  
 once father<sub>1</sub> brought in house some man<sub>2</sub> was probably year 1964 father<sub>1</sub> performed his<sub>1</sub> songs and **this man**<sub>2</sub> all time asked (Tübinger Russische Korpora)

“Once my father<sub>1</sub> brought some man<sub>2</sub> home with him<sub>1</sub>; it was around the year 1964, father<sub>1</sub> used to perform his<sub>1</sub> songs. And this man<sub>2</sub> kept asking [...]”

- (11) *Hast du schon das Neueste von SPD-Chef Müntefering gehört? Müntefering wollte seinen Vertrauten zu seinem Stellvertreter machen. Dieser Mann / Dieser bekam aber keine Mehrheit. this man / this.one*<sub>2</sub> obtained however no majority.

“Have you heard the latest about the SPD leader Müntefering<sub>1</sub>? Müntefering intended to make his confidant<sub>2</sub> his deputy. However, this man<sub>2</sub> did not obtain the majority of votes.”

In (10), the whole segment is about the speaker’s father, referent<sub>1</sub>; the demonstrative NP refers to the non-topical referent<sub>2</sub>. Similarly, in (11) the demonstrative full NP and the demonstrative pronoun are assigned to the non-topical referent<sub>2</sub>. In both (10) and (11) the personal pronoun *er / on* (“he”) would be read as coreferent with the discourse topic NP<sub>1</sub>.

#### 3.2.2 Direct complex anaphors

Complex anaphora is a special phenomenon with respect to discourse topicality. Complex anaphors are NPs picking up larger text segments which serve as their antecedents.<sup>10</sup> In contrast to nominal anaphors (which refer to objects already introduced as discourse entities), complex anaphors establish new discourse entities. They condense pre-mentioned propositionally structured referents and establish them as unified discourse entities. This process has been referred to as anaphoric complexation process<sup>11</sup> (cf. Consten and Marx 2006; Consten and Knees forth-

coming). Hence, complex anaphors are a special and clear case of non-DT-ity, since the referent is not created until the act of anaphoric reference.

Thus, our claim that demonstratives function as means of non-topical reference explains why demonstratives are preferred for complex anaphora while personal pronouns are ruled out; cf. (12) and (13):

- (12) *Meine Freundin wird bald vierzig. Dies / Das / \*Es deprimiert sie sehr.*  
 [my friend.FEM will.be soon forty]<sub>event</sub> this<sub>event</sub> / \*it<sub>event</sub> depresses her very
- (13) *Mojej podruge skoro ispolnitsja sorok let.*  
 [my friend.FEM soon fulfills forty years]<sub>event</sub>  
*Èto / \*Ono eje očen' ugetajet.*  
 this<sub>event</sub> / \*it<sub>event</sub> her very depresses.  
 "My friend.FEM will be forty soon. This depresses her very much."

### 3.2.3 Indirect anaphora

A distinction between direct and indirect reference is made with respect to anaphora as with deixis (see 3.1.1 versus 3.1.2). Indirect anaphors (Schwarz 2000, 2001; Consten 2003, 2004) go without an explicit coreferential antecedent, but have a "systematic relationship to entities of the preceding text structure" (Schwarz 2000:98), called anchors.<sup>12</sup> Indirect anaphors are preferably realised by lexical NPs (see (14), (15)) or (under certain conditions)<sup>13</sup> by personal pronouns (see (16), (17)).

- (14) *Am Straßenrand stand ein Auto. Der Motor / \*dieser Motor war noch warm, aber vom Fahrer / \*von diesem Fahrer fehlte jede Spur.*  
 at.the roadside stood a car the engine / \*this engine was still warm but of.the driver / \*of this driver missed any trace
- (15) *U obočiny stojala mašina. Motor / \*Ètot motor byl eščë tēplym, no šofëra/\*ètogo šofëra bylo ne vidat'.*  
 at roadside stood car Ø engine / \*this engine was still warm, but Ø driver/\*this driver was not to.see  
 "A car was standing at the roadside. The engine was still warm, but the driver was missing."
- (16) *Es hat so schön geschneit, und es ist auch kalt genug, dass er / \*dieser liegen bleibt.*  
 it has so beautifully snowed and it is also cold enough that it / \*this.one lie remains.  
 (attested oral comm.)  
 "It has snowed so nicely, and it's cold enough, so that it (i.e. the snow) would settle."

Here, the morphological similarity of the verb stem (*schnei-*, ‘to snow’) and the noun *Schnee* (‘snow’) together with the uniqueness relation of the predicate and its argument allows an immediate resolution of the pronominal indirect anaphor (*‘it’*).

In (17), indirect pronominal reference is possible because the concept of marriage inherently includes two participants, in the most common case one male and one female, so that the pronominal reference can be easily resolved.

- (17) *Ivan ženitsja. Ej / \*Ětoj / \*Toj ne bolše vosemnadcati.*  
 Ivan marries **her** / **\*this.one.FEM** / **\*that.one.FEM** not more 18  
 “Ivan is going to marry. She (i.e. his bride) is at most eighteen.”

*Dies-* and *ětot / tot* are very restricted for indirect anaphora. This fact cannot be explained in terms of DT-ity, since indirect reference introduces new (rhematic) referents and, therefore, demonstratives should fit. As with indirect deixis, the impossibility of indirect anaphoric demonstratives in (14)–(17) has to be explained in terms of proximity: here, spatial proximity being excluded on principle, cognitive proximity has to be given in order to allow for demonstrativity. Cognitive proximity allowing for demonstrativity in the absence of other demonstrativity-licensing features will be illustrated for direct and indirect anaphors with examples (25)–(28) in Section 4.2.

In a similar way, cognitive proximity is required with indirect complex anaphors (which are quite rare). In this case, the features ‘indirectness’ (ruling out demonstratives) and ‘complexity’ (automatically leading to non-DT-ity that uses demonstratives) conflict. In order to resolve this conflict, cognitive proximity, being a strong feature allowing for demonstratives, is needed. The use of demonstrative lexical NPs is possible only when the situations talked about are at the same temporal or epistemic level, unlike (18):

- (18) (Anchoring text, the speaker is a little boy: I was seen dragging a big, old umbrella and I was caught just in time when I tried to hide in an airplane.)  
*Aus dem / \*diesem improvisierten Fallschirmabsprung wurde nichts*  
 from the / **\*this improvised parachute.jump** became nothing  
 (Stanisław Lem, *Der Planet des Todes*, 83, German translation)  
 “The improvised parachute jump did not work.”

The events referred to in the anchoring text are present and real within the text world, whereas the event denoted by the anaphor is hypothetical. This change of level results in the unacceptability of demonstrative forms, which, on the other hand, are preferred for anaphorical relations on the same epistemic level; cf. (19), where the referent of the anaphor seems to be real:

- (19) *Dieser* / *?der Fallschirmabsprung brachte mir ein gebrochenes Bein ein.*  
**this** / *?the parachute.jump* brought me a broken leg in  
 “This parachute jump caused me a broken leg.”

The same applies to Russian; cf. (20) and (21):

- (20) (Anchoring text as for (18))  
*Iz improvizirovannogo pryžka s parašyтом / \*этото*  
 from improvised jump with parachute / \*this  
*improvizirovannogo pryžka s parašyтом ničego ne vyšlo.*  
 improvised jump with parachute nothing not came  
 “The improvised parachute jump did not work.”
- (21) (Anchoring text: I was noticed dragging a big, old umbrella, but somehow I still managed to get into an airplane and to jump off.)  
*Iz-za \*improvizirovannogo pryžka s parašyтом /*  
 because-of Ø \*improvised jump with parachute /  
*этото improvizirovannogo pryžka s parašyтом*  
 this improvised jump with parachute  
*ja vsě leto prověl v bol’nice.*  
 I all summer spent in hospital  
 “Because of this improvised parachute jump I passed the whole summer in a hospital.”

To recapitulate: the features involved in the distribution of demonstrative anaphors are analogous to demonstrative deixis to a large extent. Reference to non-topical referents is a basic function of direct demonstrative anaphors. With indirect anaphors, demonstrative reference can only be licensed by cognitive proximity.

### 3.3 Summing up

In Figure 1 different means of domain-bound reference are assigned to their most typical textual functions. Except for the personal pronouns *er/on*, this overview is intended to be valid for determiners of lexical NPs as well as for pronouns. The figure shows an increasing ‘power of pointing’ or ‘deictic force’ from bottom up.

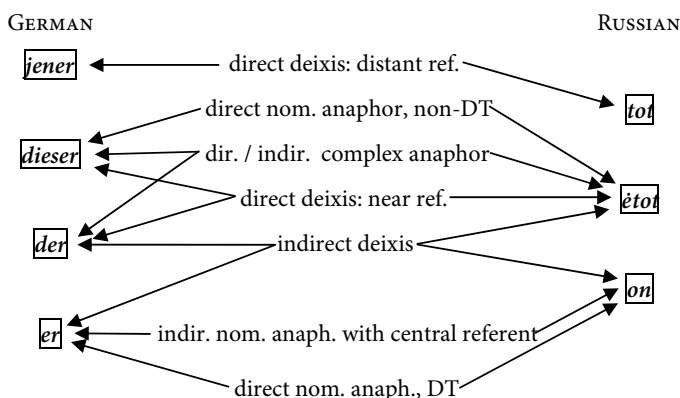


Figure 1. Means of domain-bound reference and their typical textual functions

#### 4. Discussion: Towards a unified model of demonstrativity

##### 4.1 Reconsidering discourse topicality

DT-ity, discourse segmenting and the choice of the referential means are interdependent. Not only is the choice of referential means fixed through the discourse structure, but discourse structure is also defined through the way a referent is referred to. Thus, for example, a possible beginning of a new discourse segment might cause ambiguities in the interpretation of a demonstrative reference; cf. (22):

- (22) *Ja rasskažu tebe pro Vanju. On sovsem uže spjatil. On každyj večer xodit v novyj klub. Petja včera tože tam byl.*  
 I tell you about Vanja<sub>1</sub> **he**<sub>1</sub> absolutely already got.mad **he**<sub>1</sub> every evening goes to new club Petja<sub>2</sub> yesterday also there was
- a. *On ego srazu uvidel i podošël pozdorovat'sja.*  
**he**<sub>1/2</sub> **him**<sub>1/2</sub> immediately saw and came to.greet
- b. *Tot ego srazu uvidel i podošël pozdorovat'sja.*  
**that.one**<sub>1/2</sub> **him**<sub>1/2</sub> immediately saw and came to.greet
- “I’ll tell you something about Vanja<sub>1</sub>. He<sub>1</sub> is gone absolutely mad. Every evening he<sub>1</sub> goes to the new club. Yesterday Petja<sub>2</sub> was also there. (a) He<sub>1/2</sub> immediately noticed him<sub>1/2</sub> and came to say hello. (b) That guy<sub>1/2</sub> immediately noticed him<sub>1/2</sub> and came to say hello.”

In (22a), the personal pronoun *on* has two readings:<sup>14</sup> (1) referring to Vanja who is regarded as the ongoing DT within the same discourse segment; (2) referring to Petja if the recipient thinks that the sentence introducing Petja opens a new (sub-) segment of the discourse with Petja as a DT. However, the function of continuous

reference to the most salient referent, which is typical of personal pronouns, remains the same. The different readings are motivated by different ways of segmenting the discourse.

Analogously, in (22b) *tot* will be related to Petja as a non-DT referent if the whole text is seen as one discourse segment while it will be related to Vanja if Petja is considered a new DT. Again, the function of indicating a non-DT holds with both readings. To sum up, different readings depend on how the hearer segments the discourse, but there are stable textual functions: *on* — DT; *tot* — Non-DT.

#### 4.2 Interaction of DT-ity and proximity

As noted in 2.2, so far no relation between DT-ity and proximity as factors determining the form of the reference resumption has been stated. However, the proximity factor interacts with DT-ity. Basically, demonstrativity indicates proximity (in the sense of the term stated in 2.3.2). But DT-ity overrides proximity in a physical sense of the term, which we are dealing with in deictic and textual ‘pointing’. For an interaction between deictic pointing and DT-ity, think of a case where a referent is physically present and, at the same time, becomes DT, as in (23) or (24). Here, it is most plausible to introduce this referent deictically by a demonstrative (combined with a gesture of pointing) and to continue with a chain of personal pronouns. A chain of demonstratives would be odd, although the reference could still be regarded as physical pointing to a ‘near’ referent.

(23) (Picture caption)

*Dieser Kater ist am 07.05.2006 in Jülich-Stetternich an der Grillhütte  
 this tomcat is on 2006-05-07 at Jülich-Stetternich at the barbecue-hut  
 zugelaufen. Er ist ca. 1 Jahr alt, grau-braun getigert und nicht kastriert.  
 strayed he is approx. 1 year old grey-brown tabbed and not caponized  
 [...] Vermutlich wurde er Samstagabend oder Sonntagmorgen  
 presumably was he Saturday.evening or Sunday.morning  
 ausgesetzt [...]  
 abandoned*

(www.tierhilfe-juelich.de)

“This tomcat was found on May, 7th, 2006 at Jülich-Stetterheim near the barbecue hut. He is approx. one year old, grey-brown tabbed and not caponized. Presumably he was abandoned there on Saturday evening or Sunday morning [...]”

(24) (Speaker and hearer looking at Duk’s boots)

*Sapogi u Djuka byli firmennye, amerikanskie, [...] Amerikanec kupil  
 boots by Duk were branded American American.PERS bought*

*ěti sapogi v sportivnom magazine i xodil v nix po goram –*  
**these boots** in sport shop and went in **them** on mountains  
*let pjat' ili šest'. Potom oni perepali Djuku, i on nosil ix ne*  
 years five or six then **they** passed over to Duk and he wore **them** not  
*snimaja vo vse vremena.goda i, naverno, budet nosit' vsju žizn'*  
 taking off in all seasons and probably will wear whole life  
 (Tübinger Russ. Korpora)

“Duk’s boots were branded articles, made in the USA. [...] The American bought these boots in a sports shop, and went mountaineering with them, for some five or six years. Then Duk got them, and he wore them without taking them off, in all seasons, and probably he will wear them as long as he lives.”

However, an anaphoric chain with repeated demonstrative NPs is possible as well if the speaker wishes to give emotional emphasis to his statement about the discourse referent, e.g. a negative evaluation. Here, we are dealing with cognitive proximity (as defined in 2.3.2) that can allow for demonstrativity regardless of DT-status.

- (25) (Speaker complains about someone who flooded the chat participants with spam)

*Unser \Freund\ alpa ist ein ganz widerlicher Kerl, Bah! Möge ihm*  
our ‘friend’ alpa is a completely disgusting guy uuh May **him**  
*der Blitz beim Scheißen treffen. [...] Soviel Geld kann der*  
 the lightning at the crapping struck as much money can **this one**  
*im ganzen Leben nicht verdienen, wie er als Entschädigung zu zahlen hat,*  
 in the whole life not earn as **he** as compensation to pay has  
*dieser Blödmann. Statt etwas ordentliches auf die Beine zu stellen,*  
**this dumbass** instead something useful on the legs to put  
*müllt er die Postfächer zu wie eine Horde Tauben ein frisch gewaschenes*  
 spams **he** the mailboxes shut like a horde doves a freshly washed  
*Auto. Dieser Dreckskerl. Hoffentlich faulen ihm seine Flossen ab [...]*  
 car **this dirt-guy** hopefully rot **him his** fins off  
 (similar Internet-chat Beepworld.de, 4.4.2006.)

“Our ‘friend’ Alpa is a most disgusting guy, uuh! May the lightning strike him when (he’s) crapping. [...] He (Ger.: weak dem. pronoun) won’t earn as much money in (his) whole life as he has to pay for compensation, this dumbass. Instead of getting something useful going, he spams the mailboxes like a horde of pigeons [pollutes] a newly-washed car. This louse. Hopefully his arms will rot [...]”

- (26) *No Kolosnikov! Deputat — ubijca! Savelij vdrug vspomnil ego mjasistye*  
 but *Kolosnikov* deputy murderer Savelij suddenly recalled his fleshy  
*palčy, obvislyj život i dvojnoj podborodok. I étot podonok lez.k*  
 fingers hanging paunch and double chin and this rascal attacked  
*bezzaščitnoj devočke, lapal eje xrupkoe telo svoimi grjaznymi*  
 defenceless girl grabbed her fragile body with.his dirty  
*ručiščami! Savelij sžal kulaki i myslenno pokljajsja, čto éta*  
 big.hands Savelij clenched fists and in.thoughts swore that this  
*svolož bolše nikogda ne budet nikogo lapat'! Nikogda!*  
 bastard more never not will nobody grab never  
 (Tübinger Russ. Korpora)

“But Kolosnikov, of all people! The deputy is a murderer! Suddenly Savelij recalled his fleshy fingers, his paunch and double chin. And this rascal attacked the defenceless girl, grabbed her fragile body with his dirty paws! Savelij clenched his fists and swore to himself that this bastard will never grab anybody in future. Never!”

Thus, we can explain demonstrative DT-reference with emotional emphasis (see also (4) in 2.2) as well as the distribution of demonstrative lexical NPs with indirect complex anaphors in 3.2.3: the concept referred to by a demonstrative has to be ‘near’ in the sense of conceptual proximity to entities of the preceding discourse — if so, DT-ity becomes an irrelevant factor.

As far as indirect anaphors with NP antecedents are concerned, the speaker’s intention to give emphasis to the referent can license demonstratives that would otherwise be odd; cf. (27) and (28):

- (27) *Mein Auto muss in die Werkstatt. Der Motor / dieser (verdammte) Motor*  
 my car must to the garage. The engine / this (damned) engine  
*ist kaputt.*  
 is broken.down
- (28) *Mojej mašine pora v remont: motor / étot prokljatyj motor ne*  
 (for)my car time in repair Ø engine / this damned engine not  
*rabotajet.*  
 functions  
 “My car has to be sent to the garage, this damned engine is broken down again.”

The predominance of cognitive proximity over non-discourse topicality can also be found with examples (18) vs. (19) for German and (20) vs. (21) for Russian, where indirect complex anaphors can be demonstrative (only) if the antecedent and the anaphor denote events at the same epistemic level. Here, referents at a pre-mentioned level of reality have to be regarded as ‘near’ in the sense of cognitive



proximity. An epistemic switch during the anaphoric complexation process, however, precludes demonstratives in the case of indirect complex anaphora. To summarise, we get the hierarchy in (29):

- (29) Hierarchy of features allowing for demonstrativity
- |           |                    |              |             |
|-----------|--------------------|--------------|-------------|
| physical  | (deixis: in space, | < Non-DT-ity | < cognitive |
| proximity | anaphora: in text) |              | proximity   |

Cognitive proximity is not only the strongest feature allowing for demonstrativity, but also the only one that is valid for all types of domain-bound reference.<sup>15</sup> This hierarchy of course meets general assumptions on cognition as the highest level organising information processing: matching of physical and linguistic input is subject to cognitive status and attitudes.

## 5. Summary and outlook

Both German and Russian demonstratives are means of definite reference that are at the end of a scale of increasing ‘power of pointing’. In both languages demonstratives are used exactly when this ‘power of pointing’ might be required: i.e., either to achieve a direct act of pointing (direct deixis) or to refer to a less salient referent (i.e. a non-DT-referent), or to signal the ‘cognitive proximity’ of the referent to the speaker. The most important difference between German and Russian with respect to the use of demonstratives is due to the lack of a grammatical category of definiteness in Russian. In German, demonstrative *dies-* N is regularly opposed to the unmarked definite variant *der* N. As Russian does not have any definite article, in some cases *éto/tot* N (and, more often, the postposed variant N *éto/tot*) is generally taken to be used to signal definiteness (cf. Gladrow 1998). In this case it allegedly loses its demonstrative meaning to a great extent, as in (30).

- (30) *Xotja včera ona očen’ dolgo razgovarivala s načal’nikom, segodnja*  
 although yesterday she very long talked with boss today  
*ona soveršenko zabyla ob étom razgovore.*  
 she completely forgot about **this conversation**  
 (Gladrow (1998), ex. (56))  
 “Although yesterday she talked to her boss for hours, today she has  
 completely forgotten the conversation.”

If the demonstrative, as argued by Gladrow (1998), is really used here only as a definiteness marker, this would explain why the indirect anaphor *the conversation* is possible with *éto*, contrary to the observations in 3.2.3.

However, our main interest was directed at the similarities in the use of demonstratives in German and Russian. Unlike previous approaches, we have proposed interdependences between different grammatical, cognitive and discourse features that demonstrative reference depends upon in both languages and unified explanations for several phenomena within the wide-ranging field of domain-bound reference.

## Notes

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1. Our notion of weak vs. strong demonstratives is based on Windisch (1869) and Brugmann (1904). Here, different forms of indogermanic pronouns and determiners are analysed on a historical base — according to Windisch and Brugmann, “strong demonstratives”, i.e. forms like *dieser/this* etc. are primordial forms of indexical expressions; determiners and “weak demonstratives” are derived from them, personal pronouns being historically the latest forms. The derivation of these forms is associated with a loss of indexical power (so e.g. personal pronouns cannot be used for physical deixis unless they are accented). Thus, similar to the assumptions of the modern Accessibility Theory, these expressions can be differentiated by a scale of “power of pointing”. For brief summaries, see Consten (2004:10–12).
2. Critical remarks concerning the equation of deixis and the introduction of a new referent as well as the equation of anaphora and reference continuation have been explicitly made e.g. in Ehlich 1979, cf. Consten (2003, 2004: Ch. 1).
3. We use documented as well as constructed examples. In case of documented ones we indicate the source, examples without any reference are our own constructed examples. We use underlining for antecedents and **bold** for corresponding anaphoric expressions in our examples.
4. Here, capitals indicate the focal stress.
5. Thus, our notion of discourse topic is not identical with a syntactically defined concept of sentence topic.
6. The term “emotionale Nähe” (emotive proximity) is used by Fries (2004) as well. Unlike our notion of proximity as a binary feature, he defines proximity as a scalar feature in order to describe the lexical meaning of emotive expressions.
7. However, *jen*-demonstratives contrasting to *dies*- have become quite peripheral in German usage, cf. Himmelmann (1997:49f), who therefore discusses whether German local deictic demonstratives reflect distance features at all. The meaning of physical distance is more often lexicalized in some other way, e.g. with *der andere* (‘the other one’).
8. For a closer description of distance features in local deictic systems, see Fillmore (1982) and Himmelmann (1997:45–48).

9. As (7) shows, stressed weak demonstratives are not completely equivalent to strong demonstratives – even if there might be some contexts where they are interchangeable. For a closer discussion, see Himmelmann (1997:49–63).
10. Complex anaphora is also known as “abstract object anaphora”, cf. Asher (1993). We use the term *complex anaphor* since a complex (i.e. propositional) structure of the referent as well as the antecedent serves as the criterion for definition whereas, with respect to abstractness, several ontological categories have to be differentiated.
11. The accessibility of complex referents by personal pronouns serves as empirical evidence for this claim: whereas the use of personal pronouns as complex anaphors is restricted, complex discourse entities are accessible by personal pronouns after being established by a demonstrative pronoun or a full lexical NP: [*Instead of working on her training report, she went out to eat ice cream three times*]<sub>i</sub> *This hanging out*<sub>i</sub> / *This*<sub>i</sub> / \**It*<sub>i</sub> *won't be tolerated any longer, because it*<sub>i</sub> *is not good for her at all.* (For English, cf. Hegarty 2003; for a German corpus study cf. Consten et al. 2007.)
12. Indirect anaphors are also known as “inferrables” (Ariel 1990), “bridging anaphors” (Clark 1977) and “accommodated NPs” (Heim 1982). However, Schwarz (2000) and Consten (2004) show that these terms are quite misleading: on the one hand, only a subclass of indirect anaphors is based on inference, bridging or accommodation; on the other hand, any definite NP can be integrated by accommodation or inference without being an anaphor.
13. Pronominal indirect anaphors are possible in case of a close relationship to their anchor, i.e., when the anaphor denotes an argument of an anchoring verb, e.g.: *Do not park at the teacher's park lot — next time I will have it (\*this) towed away* (“car”, Consten 2004). Only for these, pronominal forms are possible at all (cf. Cornish 2005). Examples like these show that referents of indirect anaphors can be discourse topics although they are not pre-mentioned directly; cf. also: *We were guests at a wedding. She wore a beautiful silver dress. Really, she was the most beautiful woman this evening, and that's why everyone admired her.*
14. At least such were the results of an informal questionnaire study we have conducted asking several native speakers of Russian, who were presented (22a) and (22b), to answer the question *Who saw and greeted whom?*
15. With indirect reference (indirect deixis as well as indirect anaphora), there is no referent or text segment to point at physically. (Non-)topicality does not play a role for indirect reference either since we are dealing with newly introduced referents.

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