

SOME PRAGMATIC CONSIDERATIONS IN THE CHOICE BETWEEN
THIS OR *THAT* IN ENGLISH NARRATIVE DISCOURSE

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ABSTRACT

This study attempts to explore the principles that govern the choice of demonstratives (proximal vs. distal) in English narrative discourse and the pragmatic effects that such choices create in discourse. To do this, the author analyzed the occurrences of demonstratives in two highly dialogue-type novels. Findings of the analysis revealed two major principles that tend to determine the type of demonstrative to use in a certain context, namely the contextual environment in which the demonstrative occurs and the subjective attitude of the speaker/writer. The study highlights the communicative purposes that demonstratives can convey under each of these two major conditions.

1. Introduction

Demonstratives are important discourse markers that express intra and inter sentence relations. Failure to use or understand demonstratives accurately can result in vagueness and probably breakdown of communication. Many linguists have touched upon the subject of demonstratives including Lakoff (1974), Linde (1979), Wald (1983), Gundle et al. (1989), Diessel (2003) and Diessel (2006). These studies and many others have approached the subject from different perspectives. Gundel et al. (1989), for instance, investigated the information status that demonstratives occupy in the “hierarchy of givenness” that they proposed. Diessel (2003) highlighted the functions of demonstratives: exophoric, anaphoric, discourse deictic and recognitional. McGill (2005) explored the use of demonstratives as sentence connectives in Paasaal, a language in Northern Ghana. Lakoff (1974) attempted to characterize the use of demonstratives as communication devices, making intriguing remarks about the uses of demonstratives in English.

Although the studies on the subject differ in their scope, virtually all of them agree on the labels given to the major uses of demonstratives, which are: spatio-temporal deixis, discourse deixis and emotional/attitudinal deixis. The first straightforward use of demonstrative, the spatio-temporal deixis, can be illustrated by the following examples:

- 1) *This* house is beautiful.
- 2) *That* car is expensive.
- 3) Every one is busy at *this* time of the year.

These examples illustrate the central two-way distinction that English makes in the use of demonstratives, i.e. proximal vs. distal, where the former refers to things or objects near the speaker or time in the present or relatively close to the present moment of speaking, while the latter indicates the opposite. The second type, the discourse deixis, refers back (anaphoric use) and, in some cases, forwards (cataphoric use) to subsequent discourse. The following are two examples that illustrate the discourse deixis type in both anaphoric and cataphoric reference.

- 4) “Mary, the woman at the counter, knows me and knows Mum because they used to go to a women’s meeting together each week. *That* was about a year ago” (Marriott 1991).
- 5) *This* is what you have to do: first take the books back to the library, then ...

In example (4), *that* refers to Mary’s and the speaker’s mother going to a women’s meeting together each week, whereas *this* in example (5) refers to a forthcoming discourse, i.e. “first take...” etc. In other words, instance (4) is an example of what is called anaphoric reference, whereas (5) is an example of cataphoric reference (see Quirk et al. 1985).

The third type of use of demonstratives is the emotional one. Lakoff’s study (1974) is perhaps one of the first studies that introduced clearly the role of “emotion” in the use of demonstratives. This type is linked, as Lakoff maintains, “to the speaker’s emotional involvement in the subject-matter of his utterance” (1974: 347). It should be emphasized here that such a use is seldom, if at all, discussed in EFL texts. The following is one of the examples that Lakoff presents to illustrate this type.

- 6) John likes to kick puppies.
That man’s going to get his one of these days!
**This*

Here *that* is more appropriate for it conveys a negative attitude toward John.

Lakoff (1974) argues that the first two types, the spatio-temporal deixis and discourse deixis, tend to be, “well-recognized, and the relation between them seems fairly clear ... for we can talk about objects or events occurring before and after other events in time, as well as discourse occurring before and after other discourse” (1974: 345). However, while we agree with Lakoff as far as the first type is concerned, the second type “discourse occurring before and after other discourse” may not be as easy to characterize as Lakoff claims. In fact discourse uses of demonstratives are sometimes as subtle as the emotional uses and only through a contextualized type of data will one be able to decipher how they are used and what communicative role they play in discourse. In authentic speeches and daily communication we find cases where the choice between *this* or *that* is not governed, on the surface, by the proximal – distal binarity but rather by other important discourse and non-discourse considerations.

2. Objectives of the study

This study attempts to investigate the elements that determine the type of demonstrative to use in a given context in English narrative discourse and the pragmatic or meaning effects that such uses create in discourse. Stated more specifically, the study seeks answers to the following questions:

- a. In a piece of discourse, what are the various considerations that determine whether to use *this* or *that* in a given context?
- b. What triggers the discourse and emotional uses of demonstratives and what pragmatic effects do such uses convey?
- c. Can the emotional uses overlap with the discourse deixis uses? In other words, can a demonstrative that is used as a discourse deixis marker carry an emotional sense, too?

3. Significance

The significance of this study stems from the fact that it addresses an important topic that constitutes a problem for EFL learners, namely comprehending and manipulating the subtle uses of demonstratives: discourse and emotional uses. The author of this paper has encountered many competent students in reading classes who fail to decipher the subtle shades of meaning that a certain use of demonstratives can convey. Similarly, he has come across advanced learners whose writing is a pleasure to read yet subtle uses of demonstratives are among their problems. Needless to say that advanced learners who exhibit problems in the use of demonstratives or other subtle discourse markers may not be excused. On the contrary, any misuse of a language point on their part might be inter-

preted as purposeful. Bardovi-Harlig et al. (1991: 4) maintain: “speakers who do not use pragmatically appropriate language run the risk of appearing uncooperative at the least...”.

Another aspect of the significance of this study relates to the scarcity of studies that explore the pragmatic considerations that govern the choice of *this* or *that* or their plural forms in narrative discourse and the meaning effects such choices create in communication. It is true that the field is replete with studies that have focused on the subject of demonstratives, yet very few studies, if any, have attempted to address this issue. For instance, although Gundel et al.’s study (1989) explored the uses of demonstratives, the focus was not on the functions of demonstratives per se but rather on investigating the information status that demonstratives occupy in the “hierarchy of givenness” that they proposed. Diessel (2003) highlighted the functions of demonstratives (exophoric, anaphoric, discourse deictic and recognitional), but the focus was more on the form than on the communicative value achieved as a result of the use of these forms. Lakoff’s study (1974) makes interesting generalization but while the study tends to be the closest to the focus of our current study, it was not based on contextualized type of data; most of the examples she used to illustrate her points were contextless.

4. Methodology

4.1. Data collection

To carry out the investigation, the author analyzed virtually all the occurrences of demonstratives in two highly dialogue type novels, namely *Letters to Lesley* (Marriott 1991) and *Passing Strange* (Aird 1982). *Letters to Lesley* is a story about an ambitious child whose parents are separated and whose main concern is to get his mother married to a rich man so as to become rich himself. *Passing Strange* is a detective story in which two detectives attempt to solve the mystery of the murder of a midwife. In other words, the corpus of the study consists of more than 1000 (one thousand) examples. The reason the data of the study come from narrative discourse is that this genre comprises dialogue and non-dialogue type of discourse, which represents authentic daily communication. In the analysis, the context surrounding each use was examined carefully, paying special attention to the topic, interlocutors in the case of dialogues, place where the use occurred, time, preceding and following contexts, etc.

5. Discussion

The analysis of the data shows that the choice between the proximal and distal forms of demonstratives when used in discourse depends, to a large extent, on two major principles, namely the contextual environment in which the demonstrative occurs and the subjective attitude of the speaker. In the former, the choice of the demonstrative depends on the textual effect it will create, i.e. achieving a focus sense, a shift sense, a topic continuity sense, etc., while in the latter the choice reflects the subjective attitude of the speaker or writer toward the referent. In what follows, the paper starts by highlighting the uses of demonstratives that are textually motivated and then proceeds to draw attention to the uses that reflect the subjective involvement of the interlocutor.

5.1. Textually motivated uses

5.1.1. *This*

Analysis of the data shows that the choice of a demonstrative (proximal or distal) depends on the overall meaning of the text which surrounds it. In other words, discourse or text effects (i.e. effects that are conducive to both coherence and cohesion in the text as well as certain meaning effects) tend to determine which demonstrative to use in a given context. The following examples, extracted from Aird (1982: 39) illustrate this point.

7) [*A detective investigating a crime scene*]

“His instructions had been to search the ground around where the victim lay and *this* is what he set about doing now. He brought out a length of colored twine and some pegs from his particular scenes-of-crime bag”.

8) “He proceeded to stake out an area of ground well clear of the body. Inside *this* he marked out a smaller rectangle where the tent had been”.

In these two instances, the entities “searching the ground around where the victim lay” in (7), and “an area of ground”, in (8), have become activated or evoked, to use Prince’s (1981) term, due to their presence in the immediate context (see Prince 1981; Saeed 2004; and Fareh – Saeed 2006 for more information about the concept of evokedness). Although *this* or *that* could be acceptable in these two instances, there are a number of factors that help us prefer one to the other. Immediacy, for instance, is one of these factors. That is, since drawing the small rectangle is part of the searching process that is being done now, *this* sounds more appropriate. Besides, the tense shift from the past perfect

to the past simple in the first example calls for the use of *this*, for *this* is located in the clause that contains the simple past which is, comparatively speaking, less remote than the past perfect. In addition, *this* sounds more appropriate, as it accomplishes the objective that the writer seemingly wants to achieve and that is creating some focus sense. The use of the preposition *inside*, in example (8), reinforces this interpretation; it indicates that the writer is really zeroing in on the small rectangle. Had this not been the idea, the sentence might have been structured as follows:

- 9) He proceeded to stake out an area of ground well clear of the body, and he then marked out a smaller rectangle inside *it*.

Another factor that makes *this* a proper choice in examples (7) and (8) is the continuation factor. Both examples describe one action in a single scene, i.e. searching the ground. The following examples illustrate the continuation factor further.

- 10) “‘Who would want to kill anyone?’ shuddered Mrs. Kershaw. She was a stiff woman of immaculate grooming. Her flower arrangements reflected *this*. They tended to be formal set pieces, faultlessly executed” (Aird 1982: 42).
- 11) “I got out with a cardboard box and the huge key I’d received in the mail, and crunched over the gravel to the door. ‘*This* is it’, I said to Spanzini. ‘*This* is where life begins’; and with that I put down the box, turned the key in the lock and opened the door into a lobby full of boots and raincoats” (Marriott 1991).

Example (10) is a description of Mrs. Kershaw’s tidiness and cleanness. The writer tells us that her flower arrangements reflected this unique characteristic of hers and then goes on to talk about the perfect arrangement of the flowers: “They tended to be formal set pieces, faultlessly executed” (1982: 42). That is, this last sentence in the example provides more information about the same topic. In example (11), the sentences, “This is it” and “This is where life begins” are followed by the speaker telling us what he did when entering this new life: “I put down the box, turned the key in the lock and opened the door into a lobby full of boots and raincoats.”

Another sense that is conveyed through the use of *this* is that of vividness. Consider the following examples:

- 12) [*Henry, the main character in Letters to Lesley, wakes his mother up with a cup of coffee in his hand. His mother grins when she sees her son and his friend, Lesley standing by her bed.*]

“‘What shall we do today?’ said Mum, with *this* dreadful grin still plastered across her face” (Marriott 1991).

- 13) [*Lesley, the second main character in Letters to Lesley tells Henry and his mother that her father is ready to go for their planned walk and that he has got everything needed for that walk.*]

[Lesley] ‘Dad’ll be leaving quite soon. He’s got everything ready’.

[Henry] ‘He’s very organized, your dad’, I said.

[Lesley] ‘Yes. Everything happens as planned when Dad organizes it’.

[Henry] ‘I looked at her. I thought she’d said in her letters that she liked the idea of my mum’s disorganization. Now she seemed to be changing her mind’. Mum shot me *this* embarrassing wink. ‘We’re great organizers too, aren’t we, Henry?’

‘You bet, Mum’” (Marriott 1991).

In examples (12) and (13), besides being new “this”, *this* is used to convey a sense of vividness. Observe that in these examples *this* can be replaced by the indefinite article *a/an*, yet the emphasis or vividness that is created due to the use of *this* will be lost. Also, if it was “that dreadful grin”, the reader would have heard about the grin or seen it before in the story, but this is not the case with *this*.

5.1.2. *That*

Recall that in examples (10) and (11) above, *this* is used to indicate continuation. *That*, on the other hand, signals the opposite. In example (14), below, *that* is used rather than *this* since *that* tends sometimes to have a sense of finality.

- 14) [*After making some observations regarding a murder*]

“Dr. Dabbe stroked his chin. ‘Sorry to sound like a government spokesman but I can’t say much more than *that* at this stage’” (Aird 1982: 44).

In this example, the detective expressed his opinion regarding the crime based on the bits and pieces of information that he had gathered from the crime scene. Thus, using *that* in: “I can’t say much more than *that* at this stage” signals a sense of finality, i.e. the detective has nothing to add at this stage to what he has already said.

The following example illustrates further the fact that *that* conveys a sense of finality.

- 15) [*Henry’s mother in Letters to Lesley is trying to convince her son to go to the mountains for a holiday, but he doesn’t like the idea.*]

“‘Oh no! Mum, I hate holidays away’!
 ‘But, Henry, it’s for you. You need new experiences and’-
 ‘I don’t! Anyway, I find mountains boring. Has this Lodge got TV?’
 ‘No.’
 ‘Well, *that’s* definite. I’m not going” (Marriott 1991).

In this example, Henry expresses his final decision about the topic of going to the mountains for a holiday by saying: “... *that’s* definite. I’m not going”.

In fact idiomatic expressions such as *that is that*, *that is it*, *that’s all*, support the argument that the demonstrative *that* has a sense of finality. Lapaire and Rotgé (2007) argue that their “corpus-based study reveals the intrinsic terminativeness or conclusiveness of *that* ... *That* may accordingly be termed mentally perfective and should be regarded as a sign of mental closure” (http://exchanges.state.gov/EDUCATION/ENGTEACHING/pubs/BR/functiona1sec5_15.htm).

Another sense the demonstrative *that* creates is that of contrast. The following is an example.

- 16) [*Lesley approaches Henry and his mother before knowing that Henry was her pen pal that she had planned to meet, asking to switch rooms with them. Henry’s mother responds saying:*]

“I cannot move. We always have *that* room when we come here. My early morning yodelling sounds marvellous when done out that mountain facing window there”.

Here the use of *that* is very pointing. It indicates that Henry and his mother prefer this particular room to all the other ones in the camp.

Example 16 is fairly similar to the example given in Linde (1979: 348), cited below, to highlight the contrast factor. Consider:

- 17) [*The speaker here describes the rooms of their house.*]

And then through a little pantry to *Steve’s room*, which is very small and used to be the maid’s room. It has a little bathroom in it. Then down at the end of the hall off to the left is *Michael’s room* which is pretty big and sort of square. And at the end of the hall is *Donald’s room*, which is also the living room. And *that’s* like a really huge room with lots of windows and all, and a fire escape.

In this example, there are three rooms, the last of which is the one that is singled out; Steve’s room is small, Michael’s room is pretty big, but Donald’s room is a

really huge one, as the sentence states. The hugeness of the room is made more vivid through the use of the demonstrative *that*. The author could have used the pronoun *it*; however, that strong sense of contrast, which draws the reader's attention to the remarkable bigness of this room would not have been achieved. *It* can be a better choice if the whole description is about that particular room.

5.2. Emotional uses

As mentioned above, textually motivated considerations are not the only determining principle that governs the choice between *this* and *that*; the subjective attitude of the speaker plays an important and, in some cases, a superceding role in the choice. That is, in many cases, the subjective considerations supercede other discourse types of instigators. In what follows, we will present examples that show the different aspects of the speaker's involvement in the choice of the demonstrative.

5.2.1. *That* as a marker of distance, detachment and aversion

Consider the following examples:

- 18) "‘I am told’, said Edward Hebbinge soberly, ‘that this body was returned to the tribe with whom he had been living by the tribe which had killed him.’ He paused and added distantly, ‘I understand that *that* is a custom of the country’” (Aird 1982: 50).
- 19) "‘Richanda, did you say, Sloan?’ Superintendent Leyers was always at his most peppery while unwelcome information was being relayed to him. ‘What sort of name is *that* for a girl?’” (Aird 1982: 50).
- 20) A: Have you finished your argumentative essay?
B: Oh, don't remind me! I hate *that* essay.

In all the preceding instances, *that* is used to convey a certain kind of emotional feeling. In (18), for example, the speaker does not like the whole situation; killing and returning the murdered man to his tribe. The word *distantly* emphasizes this interpretation. Similarly, the girl's name in (19) strikes Leyers as odd. He does not think it is an appropriate name for a female and thus uses the demonstrative *that* to refer to it. His thinking may be read as: "What kind of name is that to give to a girl? I don't like it, etc." Example (20) refers to B's suffering and vivid dislike of the argumentative essay. S/he could have said, "I hate it." However, this would not have conveyed all the feelings that s/he had toward that writing essay. In other words, if B used the pronoun *it*, s/he probably would not be saying

enough; *it* would not convey all the negative feelings that B has toward this essay. The use of the demonstrative *that* together with the verb *hate* reveals clearly the extremely negative attitude that the speaker has toward this essay.

The emotionally negative characteristic that the demonstrative *that* is capable of conveying makes it a proper choice even in places where either *this* or *it* is the normal choice. For instance, it is well known that demonstrative *this* can be used both anaphorically and cataphorically, whereas *that* can only be used anaphorically. Yet, we can see *that* used in places where *this* is expected as in the following:

- 21) “What do you think of that? Bob smashes up my car and then expects me to pay more for the repairs” (Quirk et al. 1985: 374).

In this particular instance, *this* is the normal use. However, *that* is used here instead to convey a particular kind of feeling; a feeling of indignation as Quirk et al. (1985) put it. It may sound marked, nevertheless it is perceived as appropriate once the reader considers the kind of emotion that speaker is experiencing here. The following example illustrates this point further.

- 22) [*Henry’s mother punches her son upon his arrival home from school, thinking that he was her boy friend. She apologizes to her son assuring him that he was not the one she meant to hit and explains what her boy friend has done.*]

““*That* man tried to tell me it was my job to make the dinner and that I should have made it, you know, hand-bloody-made it, for him, specially”” (Marriott 1991).

Here the mother of the main character in *Letters to Lesley* is angry with her boyfriend because he asked her to make dinner for him. They had been friends for sometime and probably were planning to be close friends. His asking her to cook dinner for him made her so upset that she started having a fight with him. When Henry, her son, arrived from school she started telling him the story: “*that* man...” She didn’t use his name but rather used *that* man to express her anger and annoyance of the sexist attitude, in her view, that he had exhibited. The expression “hand bloody-made it” together with the exclamation mark demonstrates her rage. Thus using *that* here pushes him away and that is precisely what happened; she dumped him.

The following example shows that the distal marker is used even when the referred to item is close to the speaker, as in the following example:

23) [Henry talks about the clothes that his mother has bought for him.]

“I looked through the parcels while she slurped her new tea.

White shorts!

‘I am not wearing *those!*’

‘Of course you are.’

‘I never wear white shorts, only black ones’”

(Marriott 1991).

Here Henry’s mother has just bought him some clothes that are supposed to be worn during his May holiday during which he will meet Lesley, his pen pal. He started looking through the parcels and was surprised that his mother had bought him white shorts. He complained that he would never wear such colors since such colors were neither his favorite nor the kind of fit he should wear during his holiday. To express his disapproval and dissatisfaction of this fit he yells: “White shorts! I am not wearing those!”. In fact, he could have said: “I am not wearing *them*, or I am not wearing *these* shorts”, since he is close to the items as he is the one investigating the parcels. However, the use of *those* does convey his absolute dislike of these white shorts.

5.2.2. Using a demonstrative when other pronouns are possible

In the following example, a demonstrative is used when another kind of pronoun could have been possible:

24) “I turned to the corner and saw our saggy picket fence. It was an awful moment. What man would want to marry Mum after he’d seen *that* fence! Mum was home too. The yellow Mini was outside” (Marriott 1991).

In this example, the focus is the fence of the house and its miserable shape. The speaker, Henry, returns from school and once he approached his house his eyes fell upon the saggy picket fence. He wondered who ever would think of marrying his mother after he had seen such a decaying fence. Now since the fence has been mentioned in the first sentence, this noun entity, fence, is now both textually and situationally evoked. According to Gundel et al.’s hierarchy of givenness (1989: 89), this entity is in focus and thus should be represented by *it*. Thus, this sentence should have or could have been stated as: “What man would want to marry Mum after he’d seen *it!*”. However, the use of the pronoun *it* would not apparently convey the strong negative feelings of the speaker toward this ugly looking, decaying fence. Only through the use of *that* is he able to convey these bitter feelings.

5.2.3. *This* as a marker of closeness, intimacy and positive feelings

While *that* tends to be used in certain contexts, as shown above, to convey a rather negative attitude, *this* tends to be used when the speaker's attitude is fairly positive. Consider the following examples.

- 25) [*Henry talks about a caller on a radio show who was saying that children of working spouses are neglected. Although Henry likes the input of the caller, his mother doesn't. In fact she got so mad that she threw away her knitting material and jumped to the telephone to refute what that caller was saying. This behavior, throwing her knitting material, created a mess in the house. Henry describes the situation:*]

“There's Supercushion [their cat], upside down under Mum's chair, with manic eyes staring crazily, fighting a thousand yellow wool snakes. And on the radio Yabba Davies is shutting up *this* thoughtful man by saying, 'Let's see what other people think'” (Marriott 1991).

- 26) [*On her way back from the family May holiday, Henry's mother stopped and bought her son lottery tickets for twenty dollars to give him hope that he might become rich.*]

“I had to let go the wheelchair to get all *these* tickets. Any one of them could make me a millionaire! Such a simple way of achieving NYR2. Why hadn't I thought of it before?” (Marriott 1991).

In example (25), Henry, a child of divorced parents, appreciates the caller's idea that working parents cannot possibly give their kids the kind of care and attention they need. His mother was completely against what he was saying; she threw everything she was doing and jumped to the telephone. Henry describes the situation both at home where his mother had created a mess and on the radio where the show host stopped the caller inviting responses. Now, Henry could have said, “and on the radio Yabba Davies is shutting up ‘the caller’ or ‘that caller’”. However, he used *this*, to show his admiration of what the caller was saying. The word *thoughtful* supports this interpretation.

In example (26), Henry has just returned with his mother from a journey, which was supposed to get his mother married to a rich man, and thus makes him rich himself. However, they ended up going back home with his mother in a wheelchair with a broken leg. Realizing how his ambition of becoming rich had vanished, she bought him many lottery tickets to give him a new glimpse of hope that he might become rich quickly. He was so pleased with them that he

let go of his mother in the wheelchair: “I had to let go the wheelchair to get all these tickets.” He could have said “I had to let go the wheelchair to get *the* tickets”, but this would not have conveyed the strong feelings of joy and happiness that he felt when seeing “all these tickets”. Besides the emotional facet of this use, *these* here brings the tickets close to the immediate presence of the hearer to show the excitement and remarkable delight of the speaker. Thus, this use is an example that shows the overlap between the discourse and emotional uses of demonstratives.

5.3. *This* with negative adjectives

The examples above show a clear tendency that demonstratives *this* and *that* and their plural forms could, in certain contexts, convey the speaker’s attitude – positive or negative. However, the following examples do not follow this generalization.

27) [*Henry complains to his father about the clothes that his mother has bought him.*]

“... Mum’s gone and bought me *these* awful clothes for the holiday. White socks and shorts and a yucky sweatshirt, and I wondered what you thought of your only son wearing *that* sort of gear. I mean-’

‘Sounds OK to me, lad’.

‘No, but it’s white, sort of babyish’”

(Marriott 1991).

Recall that when Henry looked through the parcels to see what his mother had bought him, he yelled: “White shorts! I am not wearing those!”. Here he goes to his father who lives in another house with a different wife, complaining about the kind of clothes that his mother had bought him. His intention was to convince his father of the unsuitability of these clothes and to have him buy different clothes for him. Henry had to present his case in a clever style. He says to his father: “Mum’s gone and bought me *these* awful clothes for the holiday. White socks and shorts and a yucky sweatshirt.” In fact, he could have said: “Mum bought me awful clothes”, i.e. without the use of a demonstrative, since the presence of the adjective *awful* is enough to convey his dissatisfaction. His use of *these*, however, is very shrewd; he manages to bring these terrible clothes to the immediate presence of the situation in an attempt to make his father envisage their ugliness. Thus, the use of *these* here is not emotional, i.e. *these* is not an icon that reflects his unhappiness about the clothes, but rather an intensifier or an emphatic element, for the ugliness of the clothes has been conveyed via the adjective *awful*. To put it differently, the use of *these* here is not so much

emotional as discursive. Note the second use of a demonstrative in the same example: "... and I wondered what you thought of your only son wearing *that* sort of gear". Here, after he has created a scene enabling his father to imagine how ugly these horrible clothes are he uses *that* to push them away.

This example shows that when *this* or its plural form occurs in a discourse with a negative adjective, its emotional function as an icon for closeness, intimacy, and other positive feelings is neutralized since the accompanying adjectives are enough to convey the feelings required. The function that the demonstrative plays then is creating a discourse effect such as a sense of vividness, finality, etc. Examples (12) and (13) above illustrate this point, too. These two examples are repeated below:

- 28) "“What shall we do today?”, said Mum, with *this* dreadful grin still plastered across her face”.
- 29) “Mum shot me *this* embarrassing wink. ‘We’re great organizers too, aren’t we, Henry’?
‘You bet, Mum.’”

In (28) and (29), the adjectives *dreadful* and *embarrassing* could have been sufficient to express the unpleasant feelings Henry had experienced as a result of his mother’s dreadful grin and embarrassing wink, yet the use of the demonstrative gives vividness to both events in such a way that he makes us imagine how bad both situations were for him. Again, although the demonstrative *this* can indicate closeness as well as other likable feelings, when it is followed by negative adjectives it functions as an intensifier of the kind of effect the accompanying adjective conveys.

6. Conclusion

To conclude, this study analyzed hundreds of instances of demonstratives extracted from many sources including two-dialogue type novels and spontaneous speech. Data analysis showed that the subtle uses of demonstratives could be classified into two major categories: those that are triggered by discourse factors and those instigated by the subjective attitude of the speaker. Both categories perform crucial functions in discourse. Thus, in their anaphora (discourse) uses, they can create many significant senses in discourse including senses of focus, topic continuity vs. senses of finality, contrast, etc. Similarly, when used to reflect the speaker’s attitude, demonstratives were found to create different senses including senses of delight, closeness, etc. vs. senses of indignation, distance, etc. The emotional uses of demonstratives are particularly interesting.

Our data show that the basic spatio-temporal function of demonstratives, i.e. proximal vs. distal binarity holds also for the emotional uses of demonstratives where *this* conveys a sense of closeness, intimacy, vividness and other positive attitudes, while *that* conveys senses of distance, indignation, annoyance, offence and other related negative attitudes.

Thus, while our findings support the judgments made by Lakoff (1974) relating to the discourse uses of demonstratives and also to the emotional uses of *this*, they do not support Lakoff's claim about emotional *that*. Lakoff states: while "its spatio-temporal uses are very nearly opposite those of *this*, its emotive uses are surprisingly close" (1974: 349). In examining all the occurrences of demonstratives in *Letters to Lesley* (Marriott 1991), a novel with 36,882 words, we found most of the examples fall into the following dichotomy:

intimate – likable – generally positive *this*
vs.
hostile – unlikable – generally negative *that*.

In this whole novel, only one single use of what Lakoff calls solidarity *that* is found. Examining this example and most of the examples that Lakoff presents to illustrate this use, one finds that they have to do with body parts: *how is that throat, zip that lip, soak that toe twice a day...* etc. Thus, such uses are not really frequent and do not present a counter example to our generalization, i.e. that the basic spatio-temporal function of demonstratives holds also for their emotional uses where *this* conveys a sense of closeness, intimacy, vividness and other positive attitudes, while *that* conveys senses of distance, indignation, annoyance, offence and other related negative attitudes.

Finally, our findings highlighted other uses of demonstratives in both their anaphoric and emotional uses including using the proximal demonstrative with negative adjectives to create certain discourse effects.

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