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Demonstratives and strong definites: two ways to point to a situation.

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Definiteness across domains: Two kinds of definites II.
Potsdam, December 15–16, 2022

OUTLINE

Reminder

Question

French *ce*

Dutch *die*

Analysis

Testing predictions

REMINDER: “NEUTRAL” DEMONSTRATIVES

Last time we implemented Lyons’ hypothesis with regard to the “definiteness cycle”:

- ▶ demonstrative [proximal/distal]
- ▶ **neutral demonstrative** (deictically unmarked)
- ▶ definite determiner

and tried to reduce the distributional differences between demonstratives and strong definites in Germanic (using Ebert’s Frisian data) to the presence/absence of deictic features.

REMINDER: STRONG VS DEMONSTRATIVE

	ANTECEDENT		NP WITH A REL	PROPER N
Com. Gr.	$ [NP]^s >1$	underspec		
Fris. strong	must stressed	must	must	(may stressed, affect.?)
Eng. dem	must	may	may, affect.	may, affect.
Ukr. dem	must	may	may, affect.	may, affect.

Table 1: Demonstratives vs strong definites

Simplifying the conditions:

- ▶ **demonstratives**: non-singleton extension; singleton extension – affective;
- ▶ **strong**: an anaphoric antecedent; a relative clause.

REMINDER: “NEUTRAL” DEMONSTRATIVES

We argued:

- ▶ Distal/proximal feature corresponds to an additional restrictor, subject to Minimize Restrictors!
- ▶ An additional restrictor narrows down the NP extension (if it's greater than a singleton) OR gives rise to emphatic effects (if it's a singleton), assuming Schlenker's Minimize Restrictors! and a neo-Gricean reasoning.

REMINDER: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

- ▶ We provided corpus evidence for the diachronic collapse in the proximal/distal distinction in Latin (*ille* replacing *is*) & Old French (*ce* replacing *cist* & *cil*).
- ▶ We argued that the collapse accompanied the passage from the demonstrative semantics proper to strong definites.

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CHALLENGES

- ▶ In German(ic) varieties, a contrastively/demonstratively used morpheme may differ from (a morpheme distributed as) a strong definite only in stress.
- ▶ → Morphological proximal/distal marking is not a necessary condition for the demonstrative semantics?
What is?

QUESTION

- ▶ What is the difference, if any, in addition to the contrast wrt the deictic features (if any)?

From F. Schwarz on-going experiments it seems that at least with respect to *their propensity to pick up an anaphorically introduced referent** there is no difference between English *that* and a strong definite in Standard German.

*The relative frequency of reference resolution towards an anaphorically introduced referent as opposed to a singleton NP-extension.

TODAY

- ▶ Based on new synchronic distribution evidence from French and Dutch, we propose that the difference goes beyond proximal/distal distinction (pace Lyons 1999).
- ▶ Propose different semantics for deictic and neutral demonstratives.
- ▶ Corroborate the proposal by checking its predictions in historical French corpus.

METHODOLOGY

We will consider distributional patterns from the perspective of production, rather than perception (interpretation).

- ▶ Form X is preferred over the form Y in the context Z.
- ▶ Interpretation X is preferred over the interpretation Y in the context Z.

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FRENCH: INVENTORY

	MASC	FEM
SG	ce	cette
PL		ces

Table 2: Neutral demonstratives

	MASC	FEM
SG	DIST ce N-là	cette N-là
	PROX ce N-ci	cette N-ci
PL	DIST	ces N-là
	PROX	ces N-ci

Table 3: Deictic demonstratives

	MASC	FEM
SG	le	la
PL		les

Table 4: Definite forms

FRENCH: NON-SINGLETON EXTENSION (PERCEPTION)

ce N-là/ci is the default.

(In a room with more than one woman)

- (1) Vois-tu **cette** femme-**là** ? C' est ma cousine.
see-you CE.F.SG woman-DIST Q this is my cousin
"Do you see that woman (over there)? This is my
cousin."

- ▶ #**cette** femme
- ▶ #**la** femme

FRENCH: NON-SINGLETON EXTENSION (ANAPHORA)

ce N-là/ci is the default.

(Context: description of a theatrical *mise-en-scène*)

- (2) Une femme est entrée par la porte en arrière et une autre
a woman is entered by le door at back and a other
femme est entrée par la porte en avant. **Cette** femme-là
woman is entered by le door at front CE woman=DIST
portait une grande assiette de fruits et **cette** femme-ci
carried a big plate of fruit and CE woman=PROX
une vase de fleurs.
a vase of flowers

“A woman is entered by the back door, and another one by the front door. The first one carried a big plate of fruit and the second one a vase with flowers”

- ▶ #**cette** femme
- ▶ #**la** femme

FRENCH: ANAPHORA

ce is the default.

- (3) Une femme est entrée dans la salle. **Cette** femme
a woman is entered in the room CE.F.SG woman
portait un panier de fleurs.
carried a basket of flowers
“A woman entered the room. The/#that woman carried
a basket of flowers.”

- ▶ #**cette** femme-**là** (distal)
- ▶ #**cette** femme-**ci** (proximal)
- ▶ #**la** femme

FRENCH: RESTRICTIVE RELATIVES (PERCEPTION)

ce is the default.

(Context: a conversation in room full of people, both men and women)

- (4) **Cette** femme qui vient d'entrer est ma cousine.
CE woman which comes of enter is my cousin
“**The**/#that woman that has just entered is my cousin.”

- ▶ #**la** femme
- ▶ #**cette** femme-**là/ci**: only if the relative is interpreted appositively.

FRENCH: RESTRICTIVE RELATIVES (NON PERCEPTION)

le is the default.

- (5) Trois ans et demi de prison pour **le** policier qui
three year and half of prison for LE policeman who
s' est agenouillé sur le dos de Floyd.
REFL is kneeled on the back of Floyd
“Three and a half year of prison for the policeman that
stood on the back of Floyd.”¹

- ▶ **ce** policier: second choice, more work needed
- ▶ **#ce** policier-**là/ci**

¹<https://www.lesoleil.com/2022/12/09/>

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DUTCH: INVENTORY

	COM		NEUT
SG	DIST	die	dat
	PROX	deze	dit
PL		deze	

Table 5: DIE-demonstratives

	COM		NEUT
SG	de		het
PL		de	

Table 6: Definite forms

DUTCH: NON-SINGLETON EXTENSION (PERCEPTION)

die (stressed) is the default.

(In a room with more than one woman)

(6) Zie je **díe** vrouw? Het is mijn neef.
see you DIE woman it is my cousin

“Do you see that woman? That is my cousin.”

- ▶ #**de** vrouw
- ▶ #**deze** vrouw (proximal)

DUTCH: NON-SINGLETON EXTENSION (NON PERCEPTION)

die (stressed) is the default.

(Context: description of a theatrical mise-en-scène)

- (7) Een vrouw is door de voordeur binnen gekomen en de
a woman is through DE front.door inside come and DE
andere vrouw door de achterdeur. **Díe** vrouw droeg
other woman through DE back.door **DIE** woman carried
een vase met bloemen.
a vase with flowers

“One woman is entered by the back door, and another one_i by
the front door. That/#the woman_i carried a big plate of fruit
and the second one a vase with flowers”

- ▶ **deze** vrouw (proximal): second choice
- ▶ **#de** vrouw

DUTCH: ANAPHORA

die is the default.

- (8) Wanneer ik op Daan's feestje was, liep er een
when I at Dan's party was run EXPL a
onbekende man binnen. **Die** gast begon onmiddelijk
unfamiliar guy inside DIE guy began immediately
wijn te drinken.
wine to drink.

“When I was at Dan's party yesterday, a stranger ran in.
The/#that guy immediately started drinking wine.”
(*That* improves with, e.g., *idiot*.)

- ▶ #**de** gast
- ▶ #**deze** gast (proximal)

DUTCH: RESTRICTIVE RELATIVES (PERCEPTION)

die is the default.

(Context: a conversation in room full of people, both men and women)

- (9) **Die** man die twee glaasjes champagne net heeft
DIE man which two glasses champagne just has
gepakt is mijn baas.
taken is my boss
“**The**/#man that has just taken two classes of
champagne is my boss.”

- ▶ #**de** man
- ▶ #**deze** man (proximal)

DUTCH: RESTRICTIVE RELATIVES (NON PERCEPTION)

de is the default.

(Context: a conversation at a pot-luck party)

- (10) Laat me je voorstellen aan **de** persoon die het
let me you present to DE person who DE
toetje heeft gemaakt.
dessert has made
“Let me introduce you to the person who has made the
dessert.”

PATTERN SUMMARY

- ▶ perc. – perception
- ▶ anaph. – anaphora
- ▶ rel. – restrictive relative clause

	perc. $ [NP]^s >1$	anaph. $ [NP]^s >1$	anaph.	perc. rel.	rel.	$ [NP]^s =1$
Eng.	that	that	the	the	the	the
Fr.	ce N-ci/là	ce N-ci/là	ce	ce	le/ce	le
Du.	díe	díe	die	die	de/die	de
Bav.?	déa	déa	dea	dea	dea	da

Table 7: Default forms

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SOURCE OF THE CONTRASTS

We relate the patterning contrasts to different mechanisms of reference. In a nutshell:

- ▶ Demonstratives: **bring a situation into prominence (and pick out an individual with the NP property from it)**
 - ▶ is used in case *multiple individuals* have the nominal property or in order to attract a special attention (including “affective” effects).
- ▶ Strong definites: **pick out the closest discourse situation (and pick out an individual with the NP property from it).**
 - ▶ is used to refer to a recently introduced referent, not known to be unique with respect to the NP property.

DEICTIC DEMONSTRATIVE: BRINGING A SITUATION INTO PROMINENCE

- (11) $\llbracket dem_{dist} \rrbracket = \lambda S . \lambda P . \lambda x . P(x)(f_{dist}(S))$
 property of individuals to have the nominal property in the unique situation pointed at by the Speaker which the Speaker considers not to be part of their situation
- ▶ S – set of situations $\langle s, t \rangle$ (syntactically pronoun over sets of situations)
 - ▶ P – property of individuals $\langle e, \langle s, t \rangle \rangle$ (syntactically NP)
 - ▶ f_{deic} – **prominence-based choice function that picks out a situation out of a set of situations (via ostentation)** $\langle \langle s, t \rangle, s \rangle$;
 - ▶ proximal f: picks the most prominent (=pointed at) situation out of a set of situations that the *Speaker considers to be part of their situation* (Marchello-Nizia 2006, 116)
 - ▶ distal f: picks the most prominent (=pointed at) situation out of a set of situations that the *Speaker considers not to be part of their situation* (Marchello-Nizia 2006, 116)

In the absence of ostentation, the most prominent situation is by default the closest discourse situation.

UNMARKED DEMONSTRATIVE/STRONG DEFINITE: PICKING AN INDIVIDUAL FROM THE CLOSEST DISCOURSE SITUATION

- (12) $\llbracket \textit{strong} \rrbracket = \lambda P . \lambda x : \exists s [P(x)(s) \ \& \ \forall s' [P(x)(s') \rightarrow t(s) > t(s')]]$
 $\lambda x . \exists s [P(x)(s) \ \& \ \forall s' [P(x)(s') \rightarrow t(s) > t(s')]]$
property of individuals to have the nominal property in
the situation which is temporally closer to the speech
situation than any other situation with an individual
having the nominal property (\approx the most recently
introduced suitable referent)

- ▶ P – property of individuals $\langle e, \langle s, t \rangle \rangle$ (syntactically NP)
- ▶ s – situation (a pair of space and time coordinates)

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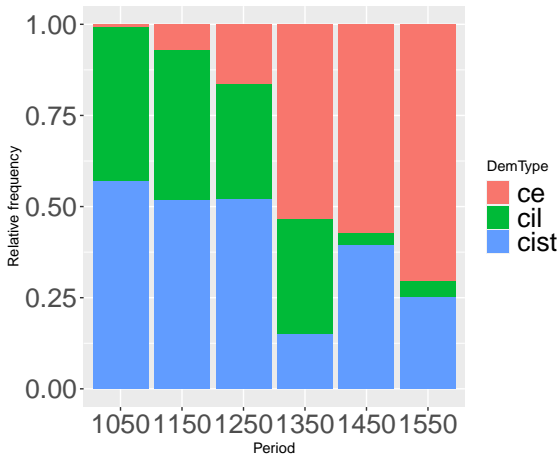
DIACHRONY: DEICTIC → UNMARKED/STRONG

prominence-based choice function over situations → closest (discourse) situation

- ▶ Since a deictic demonstrative brings a situation into prominence, it is expected that such DPs will be used to mark topic shifts.
 - ▶ The literature: Zulaica-Hernández and Gutiérrez-Rexach (2011, 175) for Spanish: “speakers use demonstratives to mark topic or subtopic shifts”; “icist/icil served as marked determiners, introducing a theme or a focus” (translated from Walter et al. (2010)).
 - ▶ **Prediction A:** deictic demonstrative occur more frequently in topic (subject) position than unmarked.
- ▶ A deictic demonstrative gives rise to “affective” effects, including with proper names; unmarked not.
 - ▶ **Prediction B:** deictic demonstrative occur more frequently with proper names than unmarked.

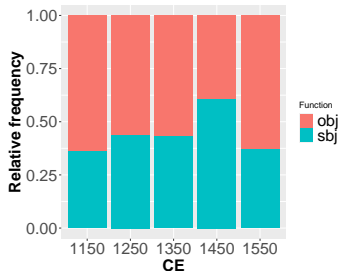
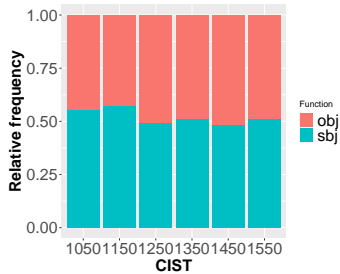
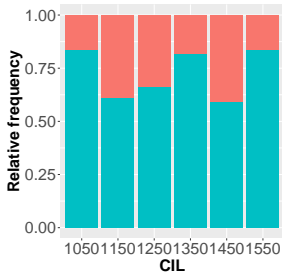
CASE STUDY: DEICTIC → UNMARKED IN HISTORICAL FRENCH

- ▶ proximal *cil* (< *ecce illu(m)*)
- ▶ distal *cist* (< *ecce ist(um)*)

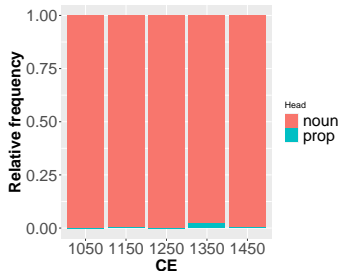
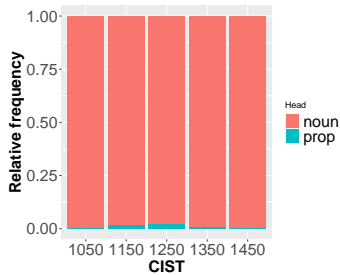
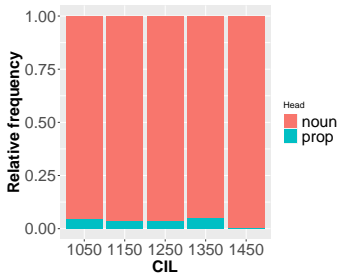


11208 NPs with an adnominal demonstrative (*cist*, *cil*, *ce*) in 50 texts ranging from 842 to 1572 (treebank Kroch and Santorini (2021)).

PREDICTION A: SUBJECT POSITION



PREDICTION B: WITH PROPER NAMES



CONCLUSIONS

- ▶ Proposed a new situation-based analysis for deictic and unmarked demonstratives that captures the (newly organized) distributional data in Dutch and French.
- ▶ Showed the analysis to make (some) right predictions for the historical data.

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- Walter, De Mulder, Céline Guillot, and Jesse Mortelmans. 2010. Ce n-ci et ce n-là en moyen français. In *Déterminants en diachronie et synchronie*, ed. Lucia M. Tovena, 86–103. Paris: Projet ELICO Publications.
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