

Demonstratives in Ga

Agata Renans, Akua Campbell, Sampson Korsah

Definiteness across domains

08 September 2023, Bochum

- family of demonstratives in Ga

Today's talk

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- demonstratives in Ga: sth + definite determiner

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- demonstratives in Ga: sth + definite determiner
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- as in Akan and Lilloet Salish
- but their semantics is very much different
- thus demonstratives in Ga add significantly to the cross-linguistic picture of what are the possible blocks of demonstratives (and their combinatorial possibilities)
- in particular: demonstratives in Ga bring situations into prominence
(see Simonenko & Carlier 2022, Owusu 2022, see also Roberts 2002, Wolter 2003, 2006, Robinson 2005, Elbourne 2009)

- new data on demonstratives in Ga

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- analysis

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- crosslinguistic picture: demonstratives in Ga are not like in Akan and Salish

Ga language

spoken in West Africa, in Ghana



Ga language



Base: RD323844 HG001831 5-07

- the Greater Accra Region
- 700 000 speakers
- one of the five government supported languages, taught in the schools
- SVO, 2 lexical tones: low and high

(Renans 2016, Campbell 2017)

- data elicitation in Ghana, Accra with 3 Ga native speakers in April 2016 and with 8 speakers in August 2023
- retrospective data from the two native speaker co-authors, elicited in Spring 2023
- standard semantic fieldwork methodology (Matthewson 2014)
- mostly: acceptability judgment tasks in context

Demonstratives in Ga

	adnominal	pronominal	adverbial
nεε	✓	—	✓
nεke	+ nεε	—	✓
nakai	+ lε	✓	✓

- (1) wɔ-bɛ hewalɛ ni wɔ-baa-fee **nakai/#nɛkɛ/#nɛɛ**.
1PL-have.neg strength PRT 1PL-FUT-do THAT
'We don't have the strength to do that.'

(Campbell 2017)

- (2) fo-lɔ-mɔ lɛ **nakai** nɔŋŋ
cut-ITER-IMP 3SG that just
'Keep cutting it up just like that.' [e.g., said to someone cutting up onions]
- (3) ni e-fee e-nine **neke** ee-bo-lɔ
and 3SG.PRF-do 3SG-hand this 3SG.PROG-shout-ITER
'And he's made his hands like this (puts hands to mouth in shouting gesture) and he's shouting.'

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'And he's made his hands like this (puts hands to mouth in shouting gesture) and he's shouting.'
- *Nakai* ⇒ the action is being performed by someone other than the speaker
 - *nekε* ⇒ the action is performed by the speaker

(Campbell 2017)

- nakai + lɛ

DISTAL

Adnominal demonstratives in Ga

- nakai + Iε
- nekε + nεε

DISTAL

PROXIMAL

Adnominal demonstratives in Ga

- nakai + Iε
- nekε + nεε
- nεε

DISTAL

PROXIMAL

Adnominal demonstratives in Ga

- $nakai + l\varepsilon$
- $n\varepsilon k\varepsilon + n\varepsilon\varepsilon$
- $n\varepsilon\varepsilon = n\varepsilon + l\varepsilon$

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Demonstratives in Ga = $x + l\varepsilon$

Contrastiveness test

- (4) a. **Gbee nɛɛ** mii-wə ni **gbee nɛɛ** mii-jo foi.
dog DEM PROG-sleep CONJ dog DEM PROG-run race
'This dog is sleeping and this dog is running.'
- b. **Nɛkɛ gbee nɛɛ** mii-wə ni **nɛkɛ gbee nɛɛ** mii-jo
DEM dog DEM PROG-sleep CONJ DEM dog DEM PROG-run
foi.
race
'This (very) dog is sleeping and this (very) dog is running.'
- c. ? **Nakai gbee lɛ** mii-wə ni **nakai gbee lɛ** mii-jo
DEM dog DEF PROG-sleep CONJ DEM dog DEF PROG-run
foi.
race
'That dog is sleeping and that dog is running.'

- (5) a. #**Gbee le** mii-wə ni **gbee le** mii-jo foi.
dog DEF PROG-sleep CONJ dog DEF PROG-run race
'The dog is sleeping and the dog is running.'

- (6) Context: There is a bunch of roses and the speaker points to one of the roses in the bunch and says:
- a. M-a-he **ɸɸɸi nɛɛ.**
1SG-FUT-buy flower DEM
'I'll buy this flower.'
- b. M-a-he **nɛkɛ ɸɸɸi nɛɛ.**
1SG-FUT-buy DEM flower DEM
'I'll buy this (very) flower.'
- c. M-a-he **nakai ɸɸɸi lɛ.**
1SG-FUT-buy DEM flower DEF
'I'll buy that flower.' (but *flower* must be a bit distant)

- (7) context: There is a bunch of roses and the speaker points to one of the roses in the bunch and says:
- a. #M-a-he **fɔfɔi** **lɛ**.
1SG-FUT-buy flower DEF
'I'll buy the flower.'

(8) context: beginning of the conversation

- a. Mikane wolo nyε. **Wolo nεε** ηῶῶ waa.
 1SG-read book yesterday book DEM interesting very
 'I read a book yesterday. This book was really interesting.'
- b. Mikane wolo nyε. **Nεkε wolo nεε** ηῶῶ waa.
 1SG-read book yesterday DEM book DEM interesting very
 'I read a book yesterday. This (very) book was really interesting.'
- c. Mikane wolo nyε. **Nakai wolo le** ηῶῶ waa.
 1SG-read book yesterday DEM book DEF interesting very
 'I read a book yesterday. That book was really interesting.'

(9) context: beginning of the conversation

- a. Mikane wolo nyε. **Wolo le** ηᵛᵛ waa.
1SG-read book yesterday book DEF interesting very
'I read a book yesterday. The book was really interesting.'

(10) There was a big celebration ceremony in Accra which was visited by the Ghanaian president and town elders. I met my friend. We talked about how beautiful the celebration was (but we didn't talk about who there was). He asked me, whether I saw any famous person. I reply:

- a. #Mina **maɲhiɛnyielɔ** **nɛɛ**.
1SG-saw president DEM
'I saw this president.'
- b. #Mina **nɛkɛ** **maɲhiɛnyielɔ** **nɛɛ**.
1SG-saw DEM president DEM
'I saw this (very) president.'
- c. #Mina **nakai** **maɲhiɛnyielɔ** **lɛ**.
1SG-saw DEM president DET
'I saw that president.'

- (11) There was a big celebration ceremony in Accra which was visited by the Ghanaian president and town elders. I met my friend. We talked about how beautiful the celebration was (but we didn't talk about who there was). He asked me, whether I saw any famous person. I reply:
- a. Mi-na **maɲhiɛnyɛlo le.**
1SG-saw president DEF
'I saw the president.'

- (12) a. **Hulu nɛɛ** mii-tso waa ηmɛnɛ.
sun DEM PROG-shine very today
'This sun is strong today.' ⇔ affective reading
- b. #**Nɛkɛ hulu nɛɛ** mii-tso waa ηmɛnɛ.
DEM sun DEM PROG-shine very today
'This (very) sun is strong today.'
- c. #**Nakai hulu lɛ** mii-tso waa ηmɛnɛ.
DEM sun DEF PROG-shine very today
'That (very) sun is strong today.'

- (13) **Hulu le** mii-tso waa ηmɛnɛ.
sun DEF PROG-shine very today
'The sun is strong today.'

- (14) Kofi he wolo nyɛ.
'Kofi bought a book yesterday.'
- a. #**Woloŋmalɔ nɛɛ** jɛ Kumase.
author DEM be.from Kumasi
'This author is from Kumasi.'
- b. #**Nɛkɛ woloŋmalɔ nɛɛ** jɛ Kumase.
DEM author DEM be.from Kumasi
'This (very) author is from Kumasi.'
- c. #**Nakai woloŋmalɔ lɛ** jɛ Kumase.
DEM author DEF be.from Kumasi
'Kofi bought a book yesterday. That author is from Kumasi.'

(15) Kofi he wolo nyε.
'Kofi bought a book yesterday.'

- a. **Woloŋmalɔ** **lɛ** jɛ Kumase.
author DEF be.from Kumasi
'The author is from Kumasi.'

- (16) Wɔ-na sɔmɔtsu lɛ yɛ akrowa lɛ teŋ.
'We found the church (building) in the middle of the village.'
- a. #**Zingle** **nɛɛ** e-bɔ nkanale.
roofing **DEM** PERF-become rust
'This roofing is rusty.'
- b. #**Nɛkɛ** **zingle** **nɛɛ** e-bɔ nkanale.
DEM roofing **DEM** PERF-become rust
'This (very) roofing is rusty.'
- c. #**Nakai** **zingle** **le** e-bɔ nkanale.
DEM roofing **DEF** PERF-become rust
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Adnominal demonstratives in Ga

	demonstrative	anaphoric	global sit. uniq.	bridging
nεε	✓	✓	—	—
nεκε nεε	✓	✓	—	—
nakai lε	✓	✓	—	—
lε	—	✓	✓	✓

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lε	—	✓	✓	✓

Adnominal Demonstratives in Ga = **x + lε**

- *Nakai* and *nεke* — identify the head noun as a member or example of a larger category

(18) **nεke nuu** e-sa ni o-kε hi shi
this man 3SG-fit REL 2SG-take live down
'This is the type of man you should marry.'

(19) **moko nakai-lε** a-kε lε be-ee
Someone that-TOP 3PL.IMPERS-take 3SG quarrel-NEG
'Such a person, you don't quarrel with them.'

- (20) a. **Ameo** e-bu.
Tomato PERF-be.in.wide.supply
'Tomatoes are very common.'
- b. **Nεke** **ameo** **nεε** e-bu.
DEM.PROX tomato DEM PERF-be.in.wide.supply
'This (very variety of) tomato is very common.'
- c. **Nakai** **ameo** **λε** e-bu.
DEM.DIST tomato DEF PERF-be.in.wide.supply
'That tomato is very common.'
- d. #**Ameo** **λε** e-bu.
tomato DEF PERF-be.in.wide.supply
'The tomato is very common.'

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lε	—	✓	✓	✓

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lε	—	✓	✓	✓

Adnominal Demonstratives in Ga = **x + lε**

- $I_{\mathcal{E}}$ — conveys the information that a discourse referent is **familiar** and **unique** in bearing the property in question

(Renans 2016, 2022, Campbell 2017)

- (21) context: Yesterday was the Ghanaian national day and there were a lot of celebrations in Accra, which were visited by one president and many town elders.
- a. Mi-na **maɲhiɛnyielɔ lɛ**.
1SG-saw president DET
'I saw the president.'
- b. #Mi-nà màɲ ònúkpá lɛ.
1SG-see town elder DET
'I saw the town elder.'
- (22) a. context: There were five town elders at the celebrations. We've talked about **one** of them. ⇒ (21-b) is acceptable
- b. context: There were five town elders at the celebrations. We've talked about **two** of them. ⇒ (21-b) is unacceptable

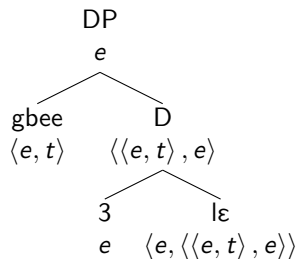
(Renans 2016, 2022)

NP l_ε — analysis (Renans 2016, 2022)

- l_ε takes two arguments (Elbourne 2005, Schwarz 2009, Arkoh & Matthewson 2013, a.o.):
 - NP
 - pronominal argument of type e

(23) $\llbracket l_\varepsilon \rrbracket = \lambda \mathbf{y}. \lambda P : \exists ! x [P(x) \wedge \mathbf{x} = \mathbf{y}]. \iota x [P(x) \wedge \mathbf{x} = \mathbf{y}]$

(24) $gbee\ l_\varepsilon$ ('the dog')



(25) $\llbracket \text{DP} \rrbracket^g = \iota x [gbee(x) \wedge x = g(3) \approx \text{the unique individual } x \text{ such that } x \text{ is a dog and } x \text{ is identical to } g(3)]$

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nekɛ neɛ	✓	✓	—	—
nakai lɛ	✓	✓	—	—
lɛ	—	✓	✓	✓

- lɛ — familiarity + uniqueness

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nekɛ neɛ	✓	✓	—	—
nakai lɛ	✓	✓	—	—
lɛ	—	✓	✓	✓

- *lɛ* — familiarity + uniqueness
- *x + lɛ* — familiarity + anti-uniqueness

- *gbee lɛ* 'the dog' — unique and familiar dog
- *nakai gbee lɛ* 'that dog' — (potentially) non-unique and familiar dog

- (26) $\llbracket dem_{dist} \rrbracket = \lambda S. \lambda P. \lambda x. P(x)((f)_{dist}(S))$
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

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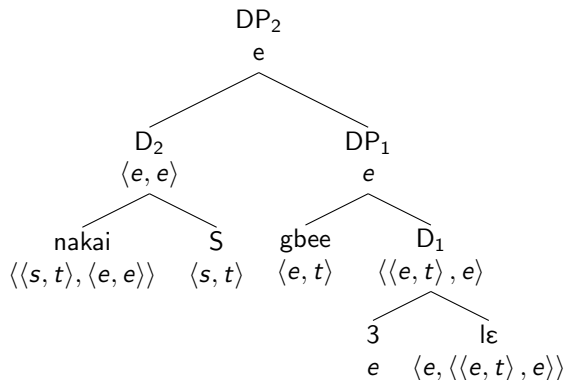
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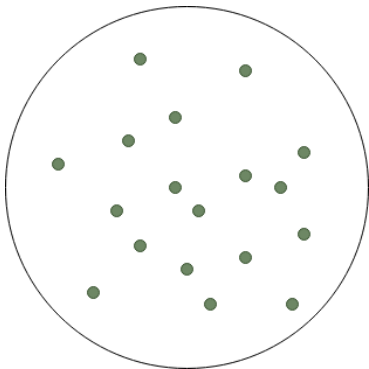
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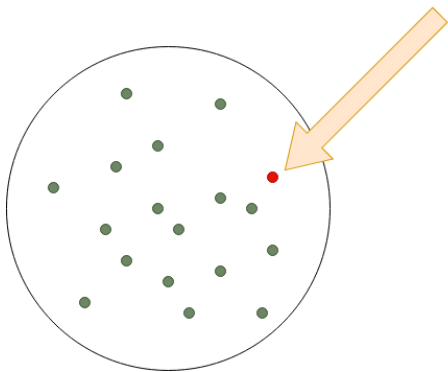
nakai NP l_ϵ — analysis

(27) $\llbracket \text{nakai} \rrbracket = \lambda \mathbf{S}. \lambda x : x \text{ in } (f_{\text{dist}}(\mathbf{S}))$ (cf. Simonenko & Carlier 2022)



(28) $\llbracket \text{DP}_2 \rrbracket^g = \iota x [\text{gbee}(x) \wedge x = g(3) \text{ in } (f_{\text{dist}}(\mathbf{S}))] \approx$ the unique individual x in the most prominent situation such that x is a dog and x is identical to $g(3)$





Situation 1

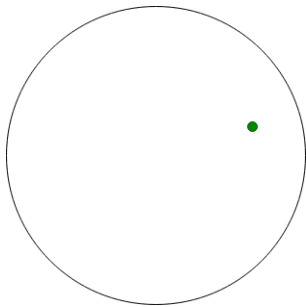


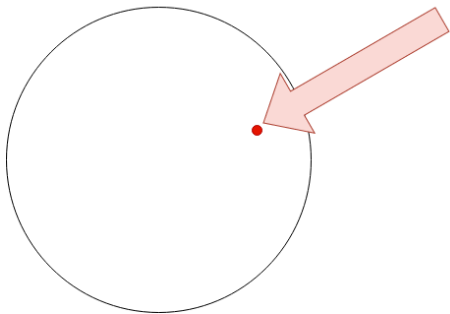
Situation 1



Situation 2









- (29) a. ? **Nakai gbee le** mii-wə ni **nakai gbee le**
DEM dog DEF PROG-sleep CONJ DEM dog DEF
mii-jo foi.
PROG-run race
'That dog is sleeping and that dog is running.'

⇒ acceptability of (29) depends on the size of the set of situations CF works on

- f_{deic} — prominence-based choice function that picks out a situation out of a set of situations (via ostentation)

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 - **proximal f**: picks the most prominent (=pointed at) (=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)

- (30) fo-lɔ-mə lɛ **nakai** nɔŋŋ
cut-ITER-IMP 3SG that just
'Keep cutting it up just like that.' [e.g., said to someone cutting up onions]
- (31) ni e-fee e-nine **nekɛ** ee-bo-lɔ
and 3SG.PRF-do 3SG-hand this 3SG.PROG-shout-ITER
'And he's made his hands like this (puts hands to mouth in shouting gesture) and he's shouting.'
- *Nakai* ⇒ the action is being performed by someone other than the speaker
 - *nekɛ* ⇒ the action is performed by the speaker

(Campbell 2017)

- (32) Á7hen! Á•7•ma **ti7** ta=t'ánamten=a lhkúnsa
look good•CRED• **demon** **det**=moon=EXIS today
ku=sgáp.
DET=evening
Look! The moon looks beautiful tonight.'

Demonstratives in Ga are not like in St'at'imcets

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look good●CRED● **demon** det=moon=EXIS today
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Look! The moon looks beautiful tonight.'

Demonstratives in St'at'imcets:

- encode uniqueness
- not familiarity

Ga demonstratives are not like in Akan

- (33) **Saa** car **no** ye Toyota.
dem car DEF COP Toyota
'That car is Toyota.'

(Owusu 2022)

- *no* — introduces the non-uniqueness presupposition
- *saa* — domain restriction

(Owusu 2022)

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- they bring prominence to situations (cf. Simonenko and Carlier 2022)
- they derive compositionally from the meaning of the definite determiner, restricted to the situation picked by the CF
- thus the data from Ga add to the cross-linguistic picture of what the building blocks of demonstratives are