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

Alexandra Simonenko (Ghent University),  
Anne Carlier (Sorbonne University, EA STIH)

**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		
<b>Fris. strong</b>	must stressed	must	must	(may stressed, affect.?)
<b>Eng. dem</b>	must	may	may, affect.	may, affect.
<b>Ukr. dem</b>	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."<sup>1</sup>

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

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

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# DUTCH: INVENTORY

	COM		NEUT
SG	DIST	<b>die</b>	<b>dat</b>
	PROX	<b>deze</b>	<b>dit</b>
PL		<b>deze</b>	

Table 5: DIE-demonstratives

	COM		NEUT
SG	<b>de</b>		<b>het</b>
PL		<b>de</b>	

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<sub>i</sub> by  
the front door. That/#the woman<sub>i</sub> 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 onmiddellijk  
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

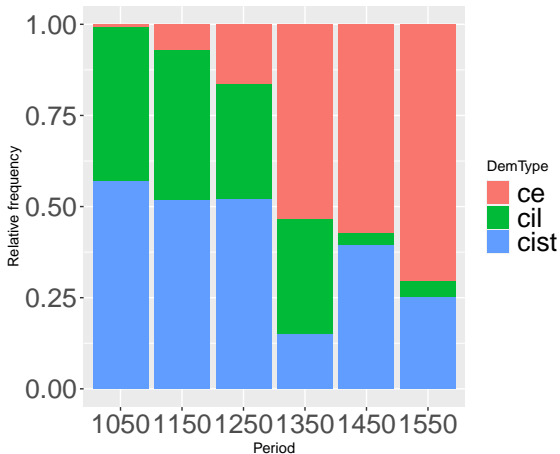
prominence-based choice function over situations → closest (discourse) situation

- ▶ 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.



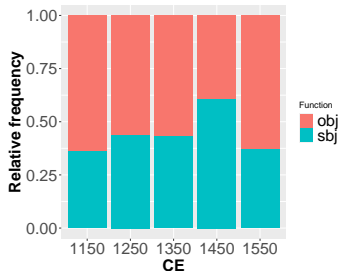
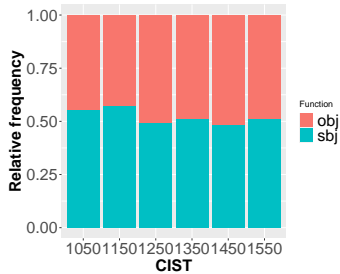
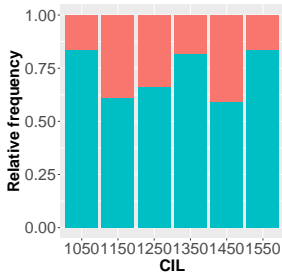
## CASE STUDY: DEICTIC → UNMARKED IN HISTORICAL FRENCH

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

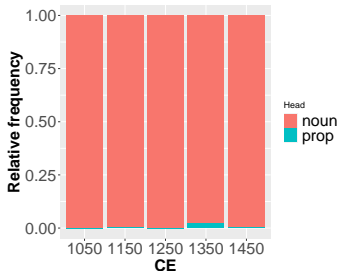
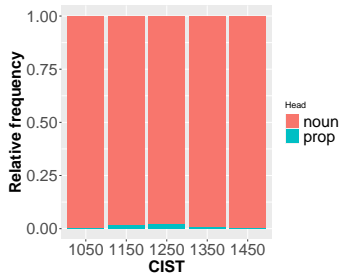
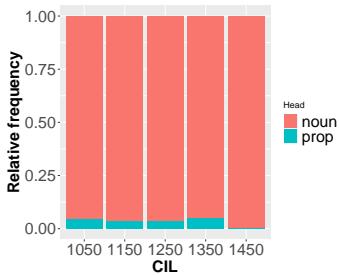


11208 NPs with an adnominal demonstrative (*cist*, *cil*, *ce*) in 50 texts ranging from 842 to 1572 (treebank Kroch and Santorini (2021)).

# 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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