Pronouns and Demonstratives*

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Joh, Yoon-kyoung. (2014). Pronouns and Demonstratives. *The Linguistic Association of Korea Journal, 22*(1), 51-67. This paper makes a new proposal on the functional distinction between pronouns and demonstratives, examining a variety of data including made-up data, real corpus data, and data discussed in previous studies. All the data reveal that it is too strong to claim that pronouns are used when their cognitive status is defined as IN FOCUS. This paper finds that pronouns can be used even when the entities are ACTIVE in the discourse. Claiming so, this paper finds the distinction between pronouns and demonstratives not in the cognitive status but in whether the referent is ACTIVE within the segment boundary or beyond the segment boundary. Pronouns must find their referent within their own segment while demonstratives can find their referent either within their own segment boundary or beyond their own discourse segment.

Key Words: pronouns, demonstratives, active, in focus, segment boundary

1. Introduction

Gundel et. al. (1993) and Poesio and Modjeska (2012) have proposed a condition that distinguishes the use of the demonstrative from the use of the pronoun. They claim that the use of the pronoun is associated with the cognitive status of being IN FOCUS while the use of the adnominal demonstrative this-NP is associated with the cognitive scale of being ACTIVATED or being ACTIVE. However, this paper finds exceptions to the proposals and would like to make a new claim.

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For instance, in (1), we can see that the noun phrase *apples* are not in focus by the time the utterance (1c) is made. However, we can observe that not only the demonstrative but also the pronoun can be used. It is further observed that the pronominal substitution comes to be impossible when there is a segment boundary between the referent and the pronominal form, as shown in (2). In the discourse presented in (2), the discourse starts with talking about John. However, the focus of the discourse shifts into Bill. In this case, the use of the pronoun is infelicitous and only the use of the demonstrative is judged to be acceptable.

(1) a. John bought apples.
 b. John bought a pear.
 c. John carried them/these apples with a plastic bag.
(2) a. John bought apples.
 b. John bought a pear.
 c. Bill went to a party.
 d. #They/these apples were heavy to carry.

Further observing these kinds of data in real corpus, this paper will conclude that both pronouns and demonstratives are used for the entities which are ACTIVE. The proposal of this paper is that the only difference between them is that pronouns must find their referent within their own discourse segment while demonstratives can find their referent either within their own discourse segment or beyond their own discourse segment.

This paper will primarily compare pronouns and adnominal demonstratives, revising the study of Poesio and Modjeska (2012) who focus on the adnominal demonstrative. Yet, I hope that the proposal concerning the distinction between pronouns and adnominal demonstratives can further apply to the difference between pronouns and pronominal demonstratives as well, just like Gundel et. al.'s (1993) proposal.

The organization of this paper is as follows. First, in section 2, I will discuss the similarities and differences between pronouns and demonstratives. Section 3 will make a new proposal for the functional distinction between pronouns and demonstratives, discussing various data including made-up data, real corpus

data, and data discussed in previous studies. Section 4 will finally conclude this paper.

2. Pronouns and Demonstratives

This section will briefly introduce previous studies on pronouns and demonstratives. To be more specific, this section will point out in what aspects pronouns and demonstratives have parallelisms and differences, citing Swanson (2005) and Gundel et. al. (2003).

Swanson (2005) discusses the fundamental parallelisms between pronouns and demonstratives in three aspects: they both can be used in referential, bound, and E-type uses. First, let us examine the three uses of pronouns. The examples in (3) are the cases where pronouns are referentially used. That is, the underlined pronouns are referential pronouns which deem to be the most basic use of pronouns. As well known, such use of a pronoun finds its referent from the saliently projected context.

    (3) a. John bought <u>it</u>.
       b. <u>He</u> is a doctor.

Swanson (2005) claims that demonstratives reveal the same referential use as pronouns. It is easy to find the cases where demonstratives are used referentially, as illustrated in (4). In (4), the underlined demonstratives pick up their referents from the immediate context surrounding them.

    (4) a. John saw <u>that</u>.
       b. <u>This</u> boy is a student.

The examples in (5) are cases of bound pronouns. They are called a bound pronoun since the pronoun functions like a bound variable in predicate logic.

    (5) a. Every girl loves <u>her</u> mother.
       b. Every xerox has paper in <u>it</u>.

Swanson (2005) further provides the example of bound demonstratives as in (6). One of the readings of the sentence in (6a) is that 'every girl talked to the mother of the new baby and every boy talked to his own father.' In this interpretation, the phrase *that particular boy* is a demonstrative that serves the same function as a bound pronoun. The same story goes for the sentence in (6b) which has an interpretation 'Professor White hopes each professor will nominate his or her own best student.' In this interpretation as well, the demonstrative shows the same function of the bound pronoun.

(6) a. Every girl talked to the mother of the new boy, but every boy talked to that particular boy's father.
　 b. Professor White hopes each professor will nominate that professor's best student.

Roberts (2002) further claims that the demonstratives in the examples in (7) also reveal bound variable interpretations. Roberts (2002) describes the interpretation of (7a) as follows: 'for every team t, there is a person p such that p is on t and p is not as strong as the other players on t and p is the player to play hardest against when playing t.' The interpretation of (7b) is illustrated as follows: 'for every dog in my neighborhood d, there is a person o such that o owns d and o thinks that d is a sweetie.' Under the interpretations described above, the demonstratives are judged to be used as bound variables.

(7) a. On every team there is on player who is not as strong as the rest. That weakest member is the one to play hardest against.
　 b. Every dog in my neighborhood, even the meanest, has an owner who thinks that dog is a sweetie.

The pronominal data in (8) show us that there is a third use of pronouns which are neither referential nor bound. This use is termed an E-type pronoun since Evans found that they can characteristically be replaced with definite descriptions, as Swanson (2005) shows in the examples in (9). The sentences in (8) are judged to have no semantic difference from the corresponding sentences in (9)[1] and are classified as E-type pronouns.

(8) a. Any man who loves a woman should respect her.
   b. Every girl who deserved it got the prize she wanted.
   c. Every host bought just one bottle of wine and served it with dessert.
(9) a. Any man who loves a woman should respect the woman she loves.
   b. Every girl who deserved the prize she wanted got the prize she wanted.
   c. Every host bought just one bottle of wine and served the bottle s/he bought with dessert.

Swanson (2005) further argues that demonstratives are parallel with pronouns in the respect that demonstratives have the Quantification-In (QI) use and the Narrow-Scope (NS) use. According to Swanson (2005), the QI use and the NS use of demonstratives correspond to the E-type use of pronouns. In (10), the underlined demonstrative which is in its QI use is not referential because *his* is bound; however, it is not bound either because if it were bound, then the sentence in (10) would mean 'every father dreads himself,' contrary to the fact. Thus, Swanson (2005) claims that the demonstrative use in (10) can be regarded as a use which is analogous to the E-type use of pronouns.

(10) Every father dreads that moment when his oldest child leaves home.

Swanson (2005) also discusses the NS use of demonstratives, borrowing the example in (11) from King (2001). The quantifier phrase *each division* in (11) has ambiguous scope. One reading of the sentence can be described as 'one professor who brought in the biggest grants in all the divisions will be honored.' The sentence in (11) is claimed to have another meaning on which 'for each division, the professor who brought in the biggest grant in that division will be honored.' Swanson (2005) claims that this scope ambiguity revealed by the demonstrative in (11) makes it plausible that the NS use of the complex demonstrative is parallel with the E-type use of pronouns.

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1) The examples in (9) are from Swanson (2005). However, I note that I made a minor correction. I changed the original phrase *the bottle s/he brought* into the phrase *the bottle s/he bought* since the original phrase seems to contain a typo.

(11) That professor who brought in the biggest grant in each division will
   be honored.

So far, I have shown that pronouns and demonstratives have many
similarities in their uses. However, from now on, I will introduce a study that
has tried to make a functional distinction between pronouns and
demonstratives. Gundel et al. (1993) and Gundel (1996) propose a Givenesss
Hierarchy and claim that pronouns are associated with the in-focus state while
demonstratives such as *that, this,* and *this* NP are linked to the activated state,
as shown in (12).

(12) In focus > Activated
      {it}   {that}, {this}, {this N}

The in-focus scale[2] usually represents the topic of the preceding utterance
in the discourse and encompasses the state of being a still-relevant high order
topic while the activated scale is involved with the referent in short-term
memory retrieved from long-term memory or the referent in short-term
memory arisen from the immediate linguistic or extralinguistic context.
   Poesio and Modjeska (2012) summarize the circumstances where English
this-NPs are used as in (13). The hypothesis in (13) follows the proposal of
Gundel et. al. (1993). In terms of it, this-NPs in English are employed to refer
to objects which are in the cognitive scale of being ACTIVIATED. This-NPs can
possibly be used for the entities which are in the state of being IN FOCUS but
this use is dispreferred due to the presence of pronouns.

(13) The this-NP hypothesis: this-NPs are used to refer to entities which
   are ACTIVATED. However, pronouns should be preferred to
   this-NPs for entities IN FOCUS.

Poesio and Modjeska (2012) illustrates the hypothesis with the example in
(14). There are several occurrences of pronouns and one instance of the

2) I would like to note that the term "focus" in this paper is different from the notion of focus
   discussed in various works of Rooth.

demonstrative this-NP in (14). The pronouns are used to refer to entities which are IN FOCUS in their cognitive status while the adnominal demonstrative is used for an entity which is not IN FOCUS but is merely ACTIVATED. According to Poesio and Modjeska (2012), by the time (14d) is uttered, Martin Carlin is established as the focus of the discourse. This means that *this area* in the utterance (14d) is not IN FOCUS. Thus, the discourse in (14) shows us that, for an entity which is not in focus but simply ACTIVATED, we prefer to use the adnominal demonstrative and this seems to be perfectly explained by Gundel et. al.'s (1993) proposal.

(14) a. In spite of his French name, Martin Carlin was born in Germany and emigrated to Paris to become an ébéniste.
   b. He settled there with other German and Flemish craftsmen and took employment in the workshop of Jean-Fran cois Oeben, whose sister he married.
   c. Inventories made after Carlin's death show that the ébéniste and his wife lived modestly in a five-room apartment in THE FAUBOURG SIAINT-ANTOINE, an unfashionable quarter of Paris, with simple furniture, a few pastel portraits, and a black lacquer clock.
   d. Few of Carlin's wealthy clientele would have cared to venture into THIS AREA.

3. Proposal

In the previous section, we have discussed how pronouns and demonstratives can be distinguished from each other even though they have a lot in common in their uses. This section, however, will start with discussing Poesio and Modjeska's (2012) revision on the hypothesis based on Gundel et. al. (1993) and pay our attention to the new notion of being ACTIVE. First of all, Poesio and Modjeska (2012) point out that the scales such as IN FOCUS and ACTIVATED that Gundel. et. al. (1993) propose are too vague to apply to real corpus. Thus, they try to translate the notions into centering terms. The

object which is IN FOCUS is the Cb in the centering theory while the entities which are ACTIVATED are the salient Cfs in the centering framework. In the centering, Cfs are the entities which are salient in the discourse. Since Poesio and Modjeska (2012) mention that they prefer the global focus to the local focus, all the salient entities in the global structure of the discourse are considered as Cfs. The term Cb is defined as the highest ranked element of Cf of the previous utterance that is realized in the current utterance. Under this specification, they revise the hypothesis in (13) into the hypothesis in (15).

(15) The THIS-NP Hypothesis (revised): THIS-NPs are used to refer to entities which are ACTIVE. However, THIS-NPs are not used for entities which are Cb of the previous utterance.

The notion of being ACTIVE introduced in the hypothesis above is specified as in (16). As illustrated in (16), being ACTIVE is distinct from being ACTIVATED in the respect that it clearly incorporates the idea of implicit evocation of discourse entities. The ACTIVE entities are basically entities that are explicitly used in the previous utterance. Yet, ACTIVE entities also include those entities which are evoked in the visual situation and are constructed by a plural object or a proposition or a type.

(16) a. is in the visual situation; or
   b. is a CF of the previous utterance; or
   c. is part of the implicit linguistic focus. We only consider as part of the implicit linguistic focus those entities that can be CONSTRUCTED out of the previous utterance. An entity can be constructed out of an utterance if:
   (1) it is a plural object whose elements or subsets have been explicitly mentioned in that utterance; or
   (2) it is an abstract entity introduced by that utterance. We consider two types of abstract entities: proposition and types.

According to the hypothesis given in (15), at least adnominal demonstrative

this-NPs cannot be used to refer to the focused element of the discourse. Extending this hypothesis to all the demonstratives used in the state of being ACTIVATED that Gundel et al (2003) discuss, we might arrive at a misleading conclusion that demonstratives are used for entities which are less given than being IN FOCUS while pronouns are used exclusively for entities which are IN FOCUS.

However, counter-examples to such a hasty conclusion can easily be observed. As shown in the discourse presented in (17), the pronoun *them* can refer back to an entity which is not IN FOCUS in the discourse. By the time the pronoun *them* is used, the focus of the discourse is *John* and the referent *apples* is not even mentioned in the immediately preceding utterance. Furthermore, we can see that this pronoun can readily be replaced by an adnominal demonstrative *these apples*. It is not surprising that the pronoun in (17c) can be substituted by a demonstrative since it is not IN FOCUS.

(17) a. John bought apples.
　　　b. John bought a pear.
　　　c. John carried them/these apples with a plastic bag.

This data set shows us that the environments where pronouns can be used and the circumstances where demonstratives can be used are not entirely distinct from each other. This example further reveals that the claim that the use of the condition of the use of this-NP is defined as being ACTIVE is problematic since, as discussed with respect to (16), the status of being ACTIVE is confined to the entities evoked in the previous utterance. In this case, the referent of the demonstrative *these apples* cannot be considered as being ACTIVE by means of situational evocation since it is not guaranteed that the apples are present in the visual situation.

The discussion so far centers around the issue whether it is appropriate to associate pronouns with the IN FOCUS scale and demonstratives with the ACTIVATED or ACTIVE scales. Now, let us examine a discourse where a segment boundary is placed before the use of pronouns and demonstratives. In the example in (19), the discourse started with the focus being placed in the

noun phrase *John*. However, in the middle of the discourse, the focus shifts to *Bill*. The shifting of the focus seems to make a segment boundary. Interestingly, under this circumstance, only the adnominal demonstrative *these apples* can refer back to the entity in the previous segment while the use of the pronoun *they* is infelicitous.

(19) a. John bought apples.
    b. John bought a pear.
    c. Bill went to a party.
    d. #They/these apples were heavy to carry.

Summarizing the observations made so far, it seems that demonstratives can be used if the referent is ACTIVE within the segment boundary or beyond the segment boundary while pronouns can be used if the referent is ACTIVE within the segment boundary. This distinction is different from the previous proposals in two aspects. First, I claim that the cognitive scale associated with pronouns is not the IN FOCUS status but merely the ACTIVE state. Second, the use of pronouns is distinguished from the use of demonstratives in the question whether they can find their referent beyond their segment boundary: the former can be used when the referent is ACTIVE only within the segment while the latter can be used even when the referent is ACTIVE beyond its own segment.

In arguing so, I would like to make two remarks concerning Poesio and Modjeska (2012). First, the notion of being ACTIVE must be revised in a way to incorporate the entities not only in the immediately preceding utterance but also in the previous utterances in general. In the examples discussed in (17) and (19), we can see that both pronouns and demonstratives can find their referent in two or three utterances back. Thus, we need to liberate the notion of being ACTIVE to the effect that entities in the previous discourse can generally be considered as being ACTIVE.

The need of this kind was also discussed in Birner (1998) regarding the discourse structure of inversion. In Birner (1998), the noun phrase *the desk* needs to be analyzed as the Cb of the discourse in (20). However, it is not induced in the immediately preceding utterance bur three utterances back. Birner (1998) claims that this type of data suggests that the centering theory

needs to be made more flexible for the purpose of incorporating the circumstances in which the Cb represents a connection back to a discourse entity which evoked earlier than in the immediately preceding utterance.

(20) They took her to a police station, where she was led in front of a well-dressed man seated behind a desk. his boots shone. Behind him hug a portrait of Hilter. On the desk was a whip. Other people were in the room.

Like the inversion structure in (20), both pronouns and demonstratives need to be allowed to look back not only the immediately preceding utterance but further back. Thus, I would like to suggest that the notion of being ACTIVE proposed by Poesio and Modjeska (2012) should be revised to encompass not only the entities in the previous utterance but also utterances further back in the discourse as in (21).[3]

(21) a. is in the visual situation; or
    b. is a CF of the previous discourse; or
    c. is part of the implicit linguistic focus. We only consider as part of the implicit linguistic focus those entities that can be CONSTRUCTED out of the previous discourse. An entity can be constructed out of the previous discourse if:
      (1) it is a plural object whose elements or subsets have been explicitly mentioned in the previous discourse; or
      (2) it is an abstract entity introduced by the previous discourse. We consider two types of abstract entities: proposition and types.

However, considering the more global structure discussed in Grosz and Sidner (1986), I am not in favor of Walker (2012) who insists that the discourse constraint that works within a discourse segment boundary must be abandoned. As the main argument of this paper suggests, pronouns cannot find their

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3) Reversely, the claim of this paper regarding demonstratives and pronouns can extend to the study of inversion under the framework of the centering theory and suggest that the centering theory also needs to be more flexible in defining the backward-looking center.

referents crossing a segment boundary, in contrast to demonstratives. This directly tells us that discourse participants are consciously aware of discourse segment boundaries even though we stack entities globally. Thus, the conclusion of this paper refutes the claim of Walker (2012) who discards segment boundaries entirely.

Now, let us examine the generalization made in this paper in real corpus. The data below are from Corpus of the Contemporary American English (COCA). In (22), the discourse centers around *Barbara* that is referred back to by the pronoun *she* so that we can consider the discourse as a single discourse segment. Thus, it is analyzed that the referent of the adnominal demonstrative *this innocent pair* is active within the segment boundary and it is further judged that the adnominal demonstrative can be replaced by a pronoun *them*. The previous accounts that associate pronouns directly with the IN FOCUS status cannot explain the fact that the demonstrative in (22) can be replaced by a pronoun as well since what is focused in the discourse in (22) is Barbara.

(22) Barbara stared at him in some surprise. She had been so positive that they were the guilty parties that his straightforward denial quite bowled her over, so to speak. "Well, it's gone," she stammered, "and you and Kat were the only ones who knew where I kept it. I-I'm sorry if I made you feel bad by saying it. I thought you just did it to tease me and see me get mad." And she walked quickly away, ashamed of herself that she had suspected **this** innocent pair. She thought they looked after her rather curiously as she scrambled up the bank, but she did not feel like stopping for any more conversation. (COCA 2000)

However, in (23), it is observed that the adnominal demonstrative *this humble house* cannot be replaced by a pronoun *it*. The reason is attributed to the fact that there is a segment boundary between the referent and the linguistic form. The referent *the house* is mentioned in the discourse segment where *the local folk* is centered around. However, either the demonstrative or the pronoun would be used in the discourse segment whose focus centers around *Teodoro Trifunovich*. When an entity is ACTIVE crossing a segment boundary and exists

beyond its own segment, it is found that the use of the demonstrative is possible while the use of the pronoun is infelicitous.

(23) Crisscrossing the vast plains is the last narrow-gauge railroad and steam engine. It will soon disappear, as will the stations and the people living around them. It may be that the twenty-first century no longer needs them and they will be relegated to the corners of memory. Meanwhile, the local folk reminisce about the days when the passage of time was marked by the arrival and departure of the train near the house. Teodoro Trifunovich displays his gnarled and calloused hands and tells how he arrived in Argentina in 1931 after leaving his native Serbia. He has since lived in **this** humble house in the 16 de Octubre valley, near the Esquel train station, a thousand miles from Buenos Aires. His accent still falters on certain words, but the tone is sweetly cadenced. He apologizes for not having time to shave this morning, but his wife has been ill for several days and, he explains, "We're all alone here. The children are grown up and they live in Buenos Aires. They have their own lives to think about." (COCA 1992)

Poesio and Modjeska (2012) mention several cases that their proposal cannot explain. In the following, I will discuss how my analysis can address them. First of all, with regard to the example in (24), Poesio and Modjeska (2012) also mention the possibility of a paragraph break affecting the use of the demonstrative. They observe that, when there is a paragraph break, the use of the demonstrative is felicitous as shown in (24) while the use of the pronoun is illicit.[4] However, they leave this case as an unsolved exception to their claim.

(24) Do not keep your patches if your doctor decides to stop treatment. Return them to your pharmacist who will arrange for their destruction. Remember these patches are only for you.

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4) Even though I discuss the account of the previous work, my informants and I did not agree with their judgment. It seems that, in (24), there is no paragraph break and the demonstrative can be replaced by a pronoun.

Concerning the data in (25), however, they point out that pronominalization is possible even though the referent is mentioned before a paragraph break. This data seems to be the reason why they didn't incorporate the concept of a paragraph break to distinguish the use of the pronoun from the use of the demonstrative. However, in (25), the discourse is consistently about the wall lights so that we don't need to posit a paragraph break between the demonstrative *these four wall lights* and the previous discourse. The fact that a pronoun can replace the demonstrative in (25) can be accounted for if the utterance initiated by the demonstrative still is in continuation of the previous discourse. The utterance that immediately precedes the demonstrative also mention the wall light. This evidently shows us that the utterance with the demonstrative is in continuation with the previous discourse.

(25) Modeled in the form of three of laurel branches tied with a ribbon, these massive all lights with their detailed chasing and burnishing reveals the extraordinary skill of their maker, a silversmith to Louis ⅩⅤ, King of France. Each wall light is slightly different, and no one model repeats another. <u>These four wall lights</u> are among eight made in 1756...

Poesio and Modjeska (2012) also observe that the first use of the demonstrative in (26) can be substituted by a pronoun while the second use of the demonstrative in (26) cannot be replaced by a pronoun. They leave these data as a puzzling question as well. However, under my proposal, the uses of the demonstratives and the facts regarding pronominal substitution seem straightforward. The noun phrase *this piece* refers back to *this brooch* that is ACTIVE in this discourse. Yet, by the time the demonstrative is used for the first time, the discourse is continually talking about the brooch so that it is ACTIVE within the segment boundary. However, by the time the demonstrative is used for the second time, the focus of the discourse shifts into the technique for colouring in the brooch rather than the brooch itself. This shifting of the focus makes a segment boundary between the first use of the demonstrative and the second use of the demonstrative. This is why the second use of the demonstrative cannot be substituted by a pronoun. The referent exists beyond

its own segment boundary so that only the use of the demonstrative is allowed.

(26) This brooch is made of titanium... It was made by Anne-Marie Shillitoe, an Edinburgh jeweller, in 1991. It's a good example of a modern material being used in jewelry. In fact, this piece is not one of the very earliest examples of titanium jewelry; The technique for colouring in this piece has already become quite sophisticated.

Lastly, I would like to note that the notion of the segment boundary employed in this paper can be a little bit vague even though this paper relies on the notion to differentiate demonstratives from pronouns. The vagueness of the notion of the segment boundary, however, seems to explain why different speakers often have different judgments on the uses of pronouns and demonstratives.

4. Conclusion

This paper has made two proposals. First, I have argued that the cognitive scale associated with pronouns is less strong than the IN FOCUS status, i.e., the ACTIVE state. Second, this paper makes a new distinction between the use of the pronoun and the use of the demonstrative: the pronoun can be used when the referent is ACTIVE only within the segment while the demonstrative can be used even when the referent is ACTIVE beyond its own segment.

In arguing so, the claim of this paper has two implications. The first implication arises regarding Poesio and Modjeska's (2012) proposal. This paper has suggested that the notion of being ACTIVE must be revised in a way to incorporate the entities not only in the immediately preceding utterance but also in the previous utterances in general. This claim further implicates that, in the centering framework as well, the Cf list needs to be liberated to include entities which are presented in the previous discourse if they are active. Another implication of this study concerns the global vs. the local discourse structure. Walker (2012) has previously insisted that the discourse constraint that works within a discourse segment boundary must be abandoned. However, this paper

finds that discourse participants are consciously aware of discourse segment boundaries when they use pronouns and demonstratives. Thus, the conclusion of this paper refutes the claim of Walker (2012) who discards segment boundaries entirely.

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