Demonstrative use in Dalabon interactions
Sarah Cutfield, ANU
sarah.cutfield@anu.edu.au

1 Introduction
Demonstratives are part of the basic vocabulary of every language, and have held a central place in the development of linguistic theory and descriptive linguistics.

- Overview of the literature on deixis and recent literature on demonstratives
- Semantics and functions of demonstratives
- Demonstrative paradigms in Australian languages
- Dalabon demonstratives and NPs
- Demonstratives in interaction
- Schematic representation of the semantics and pragmatics of paradigmatic oppositions

1.1 My parameters
- deixis broadly defined to include all context-dependent reference, including spatial, person, temporal and discourse reference
- limited to nominal demonstratives (those which refer to entities) and thus does not include deictics which only have spatial, temporal or person reference demonstratives function primarily to index their referents (‘which one?’) rather than merely locating them (‘where?’) (c.f. Enfield 2003)
- aiming for characterizations which account for demonstrative uses in different contexts (e.g. speech situation, discourse)
- language as it is used in context is primary data set and the analytical framework
- gesture is considered as part of the linguistic signal, and therefore concurrent gestures are included in my analysis of exophoric tokens of demonstratives

1.2 Demonstratives
Demonstratives belong to the nominal class, and typically function as determiners and/or pronouns. They also often function as adverbs and in copula constructions. Diessel (1999:2) identifies three criteria for defining demonstratives:

1. Demonstratives are deictic expressions serving specific syntactic functions;
2. demonstratives generally serve specific pragmatic functions (focussing hearer’s attention on object, organising information flow in ongoing discourse);
3. demonstratives are characterized by specific semantic features (i.e. they are deictically contrastive).

1.3 Standard view

- Deixis is primarily spatial, and every other form of deixis - such as temporal deixis or textual deixis - is a metaphorical extension from the spatial domain (e.g. Halliday and Hasan 1976; Lyons 1977; Fillmore 1982; Anderson and Keenan 1985).
- Reference to an entity in the speech situation is labelled exophoric reference, while textual reference is known as endophoric reference (Halliday and Hasan 1976:33).
- ‘Any given instance of reference may be either (exophoric) or (endophoric), or it may even be both at once’ (Halliday and Hasan 1976:36-7, original capitals).
- Exophoric reference is considered primary with respect to endophoric reference
  - language acquisition
  - grammaticalization
  - logical priority
- Demonstratives are deictic words which point to entities present in the speech situation.
- They locate their referent on a ‘scale of proximity’ (Halliday and Hasan 1976:57).
- Systems of three terms or more, typically have distance-oriented or person-oriented contrasts (Anderson and Keenan 1985:282)
  - Distance-oriented systems: proximity to the speaker, e.g. proximal, medial, distal
  - Person-oriented systems: near-speaker, near-addressee or near-third person/away from both speaker and addressee.
- Additional dimensions of contrast typically include the discourse status of the referent (new v.s. previous mention) or visibility of the referent
- Demonstratives are universally acknowledged as functioning to ‘identify’ or ‘index’ their referent, which distinguishes them from spatial adverbs, which refer to location and/or direction.
- The typical means by which demonstratives index their referent is by metaphorically pointing to the referent’s location. This is understood to distinguish demonstratives from definite articles.
- Common use of pointing gestures with demonstrative tokens to assist the addressee to locate the referent in the speech situation.
- That demonstratives are also used to appeal to the speaker’s and addressee’s shared knowledge of the world is not universally discussed by traditional view authors.

1.4 Recent findings

- Lyons (1999:20), Dunn and Meira (MS), and Enfield (2003:85-6) have argued for the indexing function of deictics in general, and demonstratives in particular, to be recognized as a core deictic domain.
- Lyons (1999:20) introduces the label ‘DEM’ for this indexing function, which Enfield (2003:85-6) describes as a ‘symbolic indicating function ... (which is) abstract with respect to an exophoric/endophoric distinction ... It is useful for drawing attention, but attention-direction is not a semantically specified function. Its use presupposes that an addressee can know what it is referring to. ... (It does not) necessarily encode spatial meanings.’
- Deictic reference is a product of a dynamic interaction - that there is ‘no pre-given, abstract ‘spatiality’ in the world to which the speech situation or linguistic referring expressions can be ‘matched’, or onto which they can be mapped’ (Merlan and Jacq MS).
The basic indicating function of demonstratives Dunn & Meira In Prep; Enfield 2003 ‘... is not to specify WHERE something is, but rather to specify WHICH ONE you are talking about’ (Enfield 2003:86).

Exophoric reference Reference ‘outside’ the text, i.e. reference to entities in the speech situation

Endophoric reference Reference ‘inside’ the text, i.e. anaphora, text deixis

Shared knowledge Reference to entities which are ‘shared knowledge’, i.e. assumed to be identifiable.

Here-space ‘where I am now’ (Wierzbicka 1996; Enfield 2003); the here-space is specified for location, but not distance. The boundaries of the here-space are largely determined by social interaction, and indexed by the use of deictics such as demonstratives. Physical obstacles and ‘engagement area’ boundaries can influence the location of the here-space boundary.

There-space ‘where I am not’, defined by, and only exists in opposition to, the boundaries of the here-space.

Engagement Area ‘the place which is, at moment t, the conceived site of a person’s currently dominant manual and attentional engagement’ (Enfield 2003:89).

• Recognition that the use of deictic words with intensional meanings such as ‘this, proximal’ depends on interactional meaning which is derived from contextual factors such as physical and social boundaries, and the discourse status of the referent.

1.5 Paradigmatic oppositions (Enfield 2003)

`nii` ‘semantically general with respect to spatial reference’

`nur` ‘not here’

Use `nii` of implies that the referent is ‘here’

1.6 Australian languages and demonstratives

• two-term spatial contrast (proximal/distal): Ngalakgan (Merlan 1983:74), Goomiyandi (McGregor 1999:143-5) and Jawoyn (Merlan and Jacq MS)

• three-term spatial contrast (proximal/medial/distal): Wardaman (Merlan 1994:137-8), and Ngandi (Heath 1978)

• proximal/addressee/distal contrast: Martuthunira (Dench 1995:110)

• speaker/addressee/distal: Kuuk Thaayorre (Gaby 2006:95)

• proximal/addressee/distal/definite contrast: Nyamal (Dench MS, cited in Dixon 2002: 335)


• Evans (2003:291-2) identifies twelve distinct demonstratives in Gun-djeihmi, which are characterized by a combination of spatial, discourse-status/attention, movement and contrast semantics.

2 Dalabon and its speakers

(1)0078 nga-h-kodj-larrbka-ng 1sg>3-H-head-break.open-PP ‘I broke his head open’ (JW, SC070711N60_BES_01JW)

3 Dalabon demonstratives

Spatially-specific demonstratives

nanda D.here ‘this in the here-space; here; now’

djakiŋ D.there ‘that in the there-space; there’

Non-spatially-specific demonstratives

kand/kanun D.ID ‘that (identifiable), recognitional’

nunh D.UNF ‘that (unfamiliar, less accessible); that time’

Rarely attested: nhjdja ‘that (contrastive)’

Abbreviations used: - Morpheme boundary, « Clitic boundary (intra-word), – Truncation (interruption, hesitation), > [subject] acting upon [object], 1 1st person (exclusive), 2 1st person (inclusive), 2 2nd person, 3 3rd person, APP Applicative, BEN Benefactive (applicative), D Demonstrative, dis Disharmonic, du Dual, FEM Feminine (nominal prefix), FUT Future, GEN Genitive, H Realis/Assertive marker, INST Instrumental, INTER Interrogative, RR Reiterals, LH Left Hand, LOC Locative, MASC Masculine (nominal prefix), NEG Negative, NMZR Nominalizer, NO no nominal suffix, O Object, PCUST Past customary, PI Past imperfective, PL Plural, PP Past perfective, PRES Present, R Reals, REDUP Reduplication, REL relative pronoun, RH Right Hand, RR Reflexive / reciprocal, sg Singular, S Subject, SSEQ Sequential, SUBI Subordinate, trunc Truncated (word or intonation phrase).

'h' represents a glottal stop.
4 Dalabon nominals

Functional structure of the NP: (DEICTIC)^ENTITY^(QUALIFIER). Demonstratives can function in any of these positions, e.g.

DEICTIC (adnominal, deictic determiner semantics)

0825 Nunda yarl-no nga-h-burhlkeyho-n de-b- -- D.here string-NO 1sg-H-SEQ-get.out-PRES 2opppp-H-(trunc) ‘this string I’m taking out you two --’

nura-h-na Bulanjday burrkunh / 2du-O-H-look-PRES skin.name two (rise) ‘you two look you two Bulanjday’

(MT, DWOL_Rough_Cuts_1)

QUALIFIER (adnominal, emphatic indexical semantics)

05:50 bula-h-buh-darrun-inj 3plb-3-H because-argue-PI
‘They were arguing’

05:52 yabok-ngan-kun kanunh EZ-1sgPOSS-DAT D.ID ‘about my elder sister (now)/about that very sister of mine’

(MT, Tukumba_Oral_History)

ENTITY (pronominal)

13:06 djongok-ngan ka-h-yi-ninj ngale nunda -- aunt-1sgPOSS 3-H-say-PI alright D.here (trunc) ‘my aunt said ‘alright this one --’’

13:08 nunda ka-h-ngarri-minj D.here 3-SEQ-grow.up-PI ‘this one has grown up’

(MT, Tukumba_Oral_History)

5 Demonstratives in Interaction

The data for the analysis presented in this paper comes predominantly from elicitation sessions designed to test the influence of various parameters on the exophoric uses of demonstratives. The main tool used is the MPI Demonstrative Questionnaire (Wilkins 1999).

- Tests multiple variable parameters: location, discourse status, gesture, focus, visibility, ownership.

5.1 Analysis by Parameters

- In most scenes, all of the demonstratives could be used to refer to the referent. Obviously the setting of the scene does not determine the demonstrative which must be used -> what then influences the choice?
- Nunda and kanh/kanunh most commonly attested forms.
- Kanun modified is attested in every scene.
- Djakih has least-wide distribution by scene.
- No evident proximal/distal (or medial) symmetry in the exophoric use of the demonstratives: Nunda (here-space) more commonly attested than djakih (there-space) -> more proximal scenarios
- Non-spatially-specific demonstratives used more commonly with spatially distal referents than djakih.

5.1.1 Location of the referent

5.1.1.1 Referees in the here-space referred to with nunda

(5) Scene #7

33:23 QB: [nunda njing-kun ?] D.here 2sg-DAT (appeal) ‘Is this yours?’

[LH index finger point, stroke on nun, held till end of utterance]


[Fingers of both hands extended in direction of referent, then clasped together. Stroke: kah-. Held till end of utterance, then recovery.]

(MPI_DEMQ_LB_02)

Scene #19

(6)

14:45 ka-h-nunda delefon-ngu 3sg-H-D.here telephone-2sg.POSS ‘Is this your telephone?’

(LB, MPI_DEMQ_LB_04)
5.1.1.2 Referents in the there-space referred to with *djakih*

Scene #4

1:15:30  *djakih* bod kaye-walayh-mu njing kanum-ngu-kah
D.therefly 3sg.SUB-hang-PRF ear-2sg.POSS-LOC
“That fly is hanging down from your ear”
(LB, MPI_DEMQ_LB_01)

Scene #12

0424 yibung ka-h-miyan *djakih* Bulanjijjan
3sg 3sg>3-H-get-FUT D.there subsection.name
“She’ll get it that Bulanjijjan”
(MT, MPI_DEMQ_MT)

The use of *djakih* to refer to an object entails the object is ‘not here’.

- Speakers do not like to use *djakih* when the here-space/there-space boundary is ambiguous.
- Speakers do not like to use *djakih* with referents inside their engagement area.

5.1.1.3 Non-spatially-specific demonstratives

- *Kanh/kanunh* and *nunh* are used exophorically to refer to referents, but do not encode spatial semantics such as location or distance. Their exophoric use is evidenced by the use of concurrent deictic gestures.
- *Kanh/kanunh* and *nunh* have very wide exophoric distribution, which suggests they are semantically general with respect to location and distance. They can be used to refer to proximal objects (which might be encoded as in the here-space by an alternative use of *nunda*), or to spatially distal referents, or in cases where the referent’s location is not evident or relevant.
- *Kanh/kanunh* indexes the referent as ‘identifiable’.
- *Nunh* indexes the referent as ‘unfamiliar’, or ‘problematic’.
- There is a preference to refer to distal referents with these non-spatially-specific demonstratives.

Scene #1

13:49 bod-yih ka-h-ling-ba-nginj *kanh* mumu-ngan-kah
fly-ERG 3sg>1-H-SEQ-bite-PI D.ID eye-1sg.POSS-LOC
“The fly bit that eye of mine”
(LB, MPI_DEMQ_LB_01)
5.1.2 Discourse Status: First Mentions, Grounding and Assumed Familiarity

- Adnominal demonstratives are more commonly used to make first mention.
- Pronominal demonstratives are more commonly used to refer to established referents. This is understood in terms of accessibility: the more accessible the referent, the less coding required to make successful reference to it, and vice versa.
- Nunh is used to introduce referents.
- Kanh is used to make on-going reference.
- Nunh indexes a referent as ‘not-yet-grounded’, especially with ‘no-man’s-land’ referents.

Scene #14
1:16:13 barna djaj-h-marmu-bu-n
what about 1sg>2sg-H-BEN-hit-PRES

nunda bod
D here fly
‘what about I hit this fly (first mention) for you?’
(LB, MPI_DEMQ_LB_01)

(intervening discourse)
1:16:36 djaj-h-djaj-mun kanh bod-kun
2sg-H-be.afraid-PRES D ID fly-DAT
‘Are you afraid of that fly (subsequent mention)?’
(LB, MPI_DEMQ_LB_01)

Scene #14
(15)
47:49 LB: [barna do-h-nu-n kanh mobile phone kanihdja]
INTER 2sg>3-H-see-PRES D ID mobile phone there

bathalajur]
in the middle
‘Can you see that mobile phone there in the middle? [raises extended right arm and points with right index finger at referent. Stroke: kanh, held till end of utterance]’

47:52 ND: [kabke mak nga-h-n-iyen nga-h-kabbyala-no]
nothing NEG 1sg>3-H-see-FUT 1sg-H-blind-NO
‘No, I can’t see it I’m blind’
[gazes in direction of LB’s point]

48:01 LB: [nunh hay]
D UNF directional
‘that one’
[raises extended right arm and points with right index finger at referent. Stroke: nunh, held past end of utterance]

5.2 Syntactic distribution

- All the demonstratives except nunh are most commonly attested as adnominal demonstratives, i.e. djajh ‘that in the there-space’ patterns with the non-spatially specific demonstratives.

Table 1: Syntactic functions of exophoric demonstratives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demonstrative</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Adnominal</th>
<th>Pronominal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>djajh</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kanh</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nunh</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>605</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3 Deictic gestures

- Compared to all the other forms, nunh has considerably higher rates of use with a concurrent deictic gesture, and specifically, a manual point.
- Djajih has comparable rates of use with concurrent deictic gestures as the non-spatially specific forms.
- It seems the division borne out in the data is between nunh and all other forms, rather than between the spatially-specific and non-spatially-specific forms.

Table 2: Use of concurrent gesture with demonstrative tokens

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Demonstratives</th>
<th>Used with concurrent deictic gesture</th>
<th>Manual point1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spatially-specific demonstratives</td>
<td>nunh</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>djajh</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-spatially-specific demonstratives</td>
<td>kanh</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>nunh</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td></td>
<td>714</td>
<td>575</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Percentages in this column are of the total number of tokens of demonstratives which co-occurred with a deictic gesture.
2 Percentages in this column and the next are of the total number of tokens of demonstratives which co-occurred with a manual point.
6 Discussion

Figure 1 Conceptual paradigmatic distribution and oppositions in the exophoric use of the Dalabon demonstratives.

However:
- *Nunda* behaves differently to the other demonstratives (concurrent gesture, syntax)
- Appears to be the case that factors which contribute to the referent being understood as being in the here-space (proximity, engagement area, concurrent gesture, first mention, speaker ownership), that *nunda* is used to refer to the referent. Thus: first bifurcation into ‘codes here space’ and ‘does not code here space’.
- The remaining demonstratives can all be used to index referents which may be understood as being in the ‘there-space’.
- *Only djikih* entails this (i.e. intensional meaning), hence ‘codes not-here’
- While the non-spatial demonstratives can implicate that the referent is not-here, their intensional meaning indexes the speaker’s assumption about the addressee’s ability to identify the referent.
- *Nunh* indexes the referent as being ‘unfamiliar’, or as somehow difficult to identify
- *Kanh* indexes the referent as something the speaker expects the addressee to be able to identify, either as a result of prior mention or shared knowledge, or by a process of deduction.

Figure 2: Representation of the paradigmatic oppositions in the exophoric use of Dalabon demonstratives, based on interactional usage.

References