# On two asymmetrical uses of the demonstrative determiners in English*

ROSE MACLARAN

*Abstract*

*Paradigmatic demonstratives are deictic to the physical context and are accompanied by a demonstration which identitifies the referent* (Look at that dog). *In the two uses of the demonstrative determiners discussed here their referents are not presupposed to be in the context and thus a demonstration is not possible. 'Presentational'* this/these (There's this new store downtown) *and 'restrictive'* that/those (Those members in favour of the motion raise your right hand) *are found to differ from the more straightforward uses and from each other in that the former is indefinite and specific while the latter is definite and non-specific. Finally this difference is related to the familiar proximate/distal contrast.*

## 1. Introduction

In this paper I am going to look at two asymmetrical uses of the demonstrative determiners in English — uses for which the expected proximate–distal opposition between *this/these* and *that/those* does not hold. The first is the widespread use of *this* to introduce a new referent into the discourse, which I shall call the presentational use:

(1) a. There was this funny rattle under the hood.
b. I'm afraid I can't come as I'm expecting these friends to call later.

It appears to correspond more closely to the indefinite than to the definite article. When it is replaced by *that* the presentational sense is lost:

(2) There was that funny rattle under the hood.

(2) is only appropriate if the addressee is in a position to recognise the funny rattle referred to, whereas use of (1a) does not assume that the addressee has prior knowledge of the rattle.[1]

Linguistics 18 (1980), 803–820. 0024–3949/80/0018–0803 $2.00

The second case is a rather formal use of *that*:

(3) a. Those students who have completed their coursework by the beginning of the seventh semester are eligible for reduced tuition.
b. Alimony payments will be based only on that income declared at the time of divorce, and not on projected future earnings.

Once again I am not concerned with the anaphoric use of demonstratives, nor with their deictic use in which the reference is clarified by the presence of the referent in the immediate context ( I shall henceforth call this the direct deictic use). The above sentences can occur as discourse initial utterances and in the absence of the referents. But if *that/those* is replaced by *this/these* in example (3) only an anaphoric or direct deictic interpretation is possible.

In this paper I will examine how these two asymmetrical uses of the demonstratives are related to their direct deictic use. Section 2 is therefore an analysis of the more straightforward use of demonstratives and their place in the article system of English. I will leave the discussion of the asymmetrical uses until section 3, where I will contrast them with the findings of section 2.

## 2. The articles

Figure 1 gives a standard analysis of the articles, cf. Stockwell, Schachter and Partee, 1973; Lyons, 1977.[2]

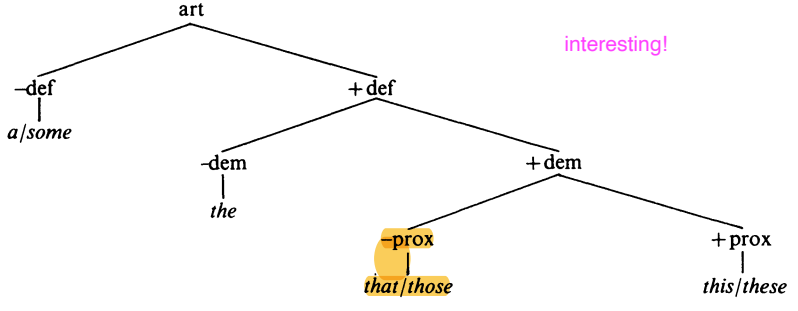


Figure 1. *An analysis of the English articles*

In both works cited above this is proposed as a syntactic analysis. A large part of the justification of decomposing the articles into syntactic features came from the presence in the grammar of proposed transformational

rules such as pronominalisation and definitisation. However, since the co-occurrence facts that such transformations were proposed to explain are increasingly accounted for in the semantic component by interpretive rules (e.g. Jackendorff, 1972), I prefer to consider articles as being inserted in deep structure just like other lexical items. I shall therefore treat the distinctions given in figure 1 as semantic rather than syntactic. Since my discussion does not directly address this issue, however, the analysis I propose is compatible with a framework in which the features distinguishing demonstratives are syntactic or semantic.

### 2.1 *Referring expressions*

Articles occur as constituents of noun phrases, and demonstrative noun phrases are typically used as referring expressions.

(4) This book is mine.
(5) Look at those people.
(6) Rod Laver was one of the amateur tennis greats. This left-handed Australian won Wimbledon three times before turning professional.

(I am excluding predicate nominals from this paper.) I shall therefore begin with a brief discussion of reference as a background against which demonstratives can be considered.

Most work in the philosophical tradition has focused on definite descriptions such as the following:

(7) The five-year-old senator lives in Arlington.

Given that there is no five-year-old senator, it has been argued both that the sentence is false (Russell, 1905), and that its assertion is neither true nor false (Strawson, 1950). Russell argues that definite descriptions have an existential entailment; if the entailment is false then so is the sentence. Strawson, on the other hand, claims that they have an existential presuppostion, the failure of which renders the assertion of the sentence meaningless (neither true nor false) — the speech act has simply failed. More recently a compromise has been put forward within a truth-conditional semantic and a Gricean pragmatic framework (Kempson, 1975; Wilson, 1975; Stalnaker, 1977). These accounts suggest that the existential proposition is semantically entailed, since it can fall within the scope of negation:

(8) A: My sister is dating the King of France.
B: You can't fool me. Your sister is NOT dating the King of France. France has no king.

But the existential proposition is also pragmatically presupposed — the use of a definite description conversationally implicates the existence of the referent, though since pragmatic presuppositions are derived from rules of conversation (Grice, 1975) they are cancellable as in example (8). For the purposes of this paper I will adopt without further argument this account of definite descriptions in terms of semantic entailment and pragmatic presupposition. A full discussion can be found in the works cited above. A major advantage of this approach is that indefinite descriptions can easily be accommodated. They have the same semantic representation as definite descriptions, for they also have an existential entailment, but they differ in the associated pragmatic presuppositions. I will return to this in section 2.4.

Demonstrative descriptions used referentially, like the definite and indefinite descriptions discussed above, have an existential entailment. Since in their direct deictic use the referent of the demonstrative description is in the immediate situation, it is difficult to imagine how the existential entailment could be cancelled; but in other uses it can fall within the scope of negation:

(9) I sat up all night but I didn't see that monster you told me about. I'm convinced there is no monster.

In this way demonstrative descriptions are no different from other referring expressions.

## 2.2 *Definiteness*

Postal gives the following tests for definiteness and indefiniteness in English:

(i) preposed adjective construction.

(10) a. Big as Harry was, he could not lift it.

b. Big as { the / #a / this / that } gorilla was, he could not lift it.[3]

(ii) possessive construction.

(11) a. Fido is John's.

b. { The / #A / This / That } dog is John's.

(iii) prearticle construction.

(12) $\left\{\begin{matrix}\text{Which}\\ \text{Some}\\ \text{All}\end{matrix}\right\}$ of $\left\{\begin{matrix}\text{the}\\ \#\text{some}\\ \#\text{ø}\\ \text{these}\\ \text{those}\end{matrix}\right\}$ men. . . .

(iv) anticipatory *there*.

(13) There is $\left\{\begin{matrix}\text{a}\\ \#\text{the}\\ \#\text{this}\\ \#\text{that}\end{matrix}\right\}$ book on the table.[4]

In their straightforward use the demonstratives must thus be aligned with the definite rather than the indefinite article. Postal considers these co-occurrence facts to be syntactic, but as I am maintaining a semantic/pragmatic account of articles, I must show that the above contexts impose a semantic or pragmatic constraint on the occurrence of the articles. The traditional logical representation of the definite article includes both existence and uniqueness entailments. The existence entailment has been discussed above. The uniqueness entailment can better be reformulated in pragmatic terms (cf. Kempson, 1975; Hawkins, 1978). Roughly, a definite noun phrase is used appropriately when it denotes a referent unambiguously for the hearer. Example (14) is infelicitous because the speaker has not given the hearer enough information to identify which dog is being referred to — the description does not pick out a unique dog:

(14) #I have fourteen dogs and fifteen cats. I like the dog the best.

A speaker can felicitously use the definite over the indefinite article if there is reason to believe that the addressee knows or can infer to whom or what the speaker is referring:

(15) a. I have the copy of *Aspects*.
b. I have a copy of *Aspects*.

(15a) is appropriate if the addressee is believed to be in a position to recognise which copy is being referred to; (15b) is appropriate if there is no such presupposition.

The important point is that what in traditional semantic accounts was formulated as a truth-conditional uniqueness entailment is here treated as a pragmatic condition on the appropriate use of definite articles, and appropriateness is determined by what speakers believe their hearers know or can infer. Speakers are thus viewed as accommodating themselves to their addressees in their use of articles.

### 2.3 *Demonstrative*

Lyons (1977) gives the following test environments to distinguish the demonstratives from the definite article:

(16) a. #I like the/this/that book better than the book.
b. #I like the book better than the/this/that book.
c. I like this/that book better than this/that book.

(17) a. #I'll take this/that one and the one.
b. I'll take this/that one and this/that one.

The difference in acceptability is due to the fact that although both sets of articles are definite and must therefore refer unambiguously, only the demonstrative succeeds in doing so in the above examples. This is because it contains the added information of the location of the referent in relation to the speaker. The use of a demonstrative situates the referent of the description as being near the speaker or not. The clearest case is the direct deictic use that locates the referent in physical space (18), (where the same demonstrative is used twice to indicate different objects it is the gesture accompanying its use that gives the location of the referent). Demonstratives are commonly used anaphorically, exploiting discourse distance (19) and (20), and can also refer to temporal distance (21) and emotional distance (22) and (23), (cf. Lakoff, 1974; Fillmore, 1975.)

(18) Shall we take these seats or those?
(19) Wayne was delighted to be appointed Iranian cultural attaché, but he came to regret that posting.
(20) You'll never believe this: I've just won the Nobel prize.
(21) Do you want to go to a movie this evening?
(22) That Idi Amin is a real tyrant.
(23) The only good thing to come out of this Harrisburg thing is that it has really opened people's eyes to the problems of nuclear power.

An interesting difference between demonstrative descriptions and definite descriptions with *the* is that the referent of the former must be given in the linguistic or extra-linguistic context. It is not enough that it can be inferred.

(24) I got into the car and turned on $\left\{\begin{array}{c}\text{the}\\ \#\text{this}\\ \#\text{that}\end{array}\right\}$ engine.

(25) $\left\{\begin{array}{c}\text{The}\\ \#\text{This}\\ \#\text{That}\end{array}\right\}$ composer of this concerto must have had some familiarity with Eastern music.

Since cars are assumed to have engines and concertos are assumed to have composers, it can easily be inferred which engine and which composer is being referred to, although neither has been previously mentioned or is in the visible context. Hawkins (1978) claims that whereas a definite description is appropriate here, a demonstrative description is anomalous because there is a 'matching constraint' on the use of demonstratives. In denoting a referent with a demonstrative description the speaker: 'instructs the hearer to match this linguistic referent with some identifiable object, where identifiability means either (i) visible in the situation or (ii) known on the basis of previous discourse' (op. cit. p. 152). This formulation is a bit restrictive. 'Visible' should be replaced by 'perceptible', example (20) shows that the referent may be present only in the succeeding context, and 'previous discourse' will have to be stretched to the wider notion of shared knowledge and beliefs for, as examples (22) and (23) show, the referents do not have to have been specifically mentioned previously in the discourse. However, thus modified, the matching constraint does seem to capture the difference between the demonstrative and the definite articles.

It has been pointed out (Hawkins, 1978; Lyons, 1977) that the cooccurrence of demonstratives with superlatives, *only* and other modifiers which imply the uniqueness of what is denoted is unacceptable:

(26) $\left\{\begin{array}{l}\cdot\text{The}\\ \#\text{This}\\ \#\text{That}\end{array}\right\}$ richest/only/next customer bought up everything in the store.

This suggests that a demonstrative description carries the implication that the referent is not unique (due to the possible contrast between *this* one and *that* one). However, in their direct deictic and anaphoric uses the demonstratives do cooccur with uniqueness modifiers:

(27) This next slide is of Joey and Martha at the Cape.
(28) On every team there is one player who is not as strong as the rest. That weakest member is the one to play hardest against.

Nor in examples (22) and (23) is there any implication that there is more than one Idi Amin or Harrisburg disaster. The demonstratives in (26) are only anomalous if the referents of the description are not readily available in the linguistic or extra-linguistic context. But this is just the case in which demonstratives are generally inappropriate because of the matching constraint. The question of uniqueness modifiers is a red herring.[5]

## 2.4 *Specificity*

A further feature, which is not formally marked in English but which has been much discussed particularly in relation to indefinite descriptions, is that of specificity. There are two separate ways in which the specific/non-specific distinction has been made. First, it is used to describe the scope ambiguities of sentences such as (29) and (30):

(29) John wants to marry a bank manager.
  a. She's called Sheila.
  b. He thinks it'll be an easy way to get rich.

(30) I didn't see a runner in front of me,
  a. so I thought that I was first. But then he appeared out of the shadows.
  b. so I realised that I was first and would win the race.

On one reading of (29), the reading on which the indefinite description has wide scope with respect to the verb *want*, John wants to marry a particular individual who happens to be a bank manager; on the narrow scope reading he wants to marry such a person. Similarly, on the first reading of (30) there is a particular runner whom I did not see, but on the second reading there is no such runner — the indefinite description falls within the scope of negation.

The same terminology is also used to describe the ambiguity which occurs in non-opaque contexts and is purely dependent on the speaker's intention in his use of the expression.

(31) We're missing a child.
  a. I can't see Johnny.
  b. I can only see eight children and there should be nine.

(32) Fred has married a good cook.
  a. Stella's renowned for her cooking.
  b. Look how fat he has become.

On one reading of (31) the speaker has a particular individual in mind, Johnny, whereas on the other reading he may not yet know the identity of the missing child. Similarly, on the first reading of (32) the speaker knows who Fred's wife is, while on the second her identity is irrelevant to what is being said.

Neither distinction can be reduced to the other. Since the second distinction occurs in transparent contexts, it cannot be explained by means of scope relations. But nor can the ambiguities of (29) and (30) be explained solely in terms of whether or not the speaker has a specific

individual in mind. In (33) there is a particular person whom John wants to marry and the indefinite description must therefore fall outside the scope of the opaque context, and yet the speaker does not have a specific individual in mind.

(33) John wants to marry a bank manager. I don't know who she is, but I'm sure she's very nice.

The distinctions interact in the following way: if the speaker has a particular individual in mind, the description must take wide scope, but the converse does not hold, as is shown by (33) (cf. Ioup, 1977).

Following Klein (1978) it is the second distinction, the one dependent on the speaker's intentions, that I shall call the specific/non-specific ambiguity. It corresponds to the referential/attributive distinction Donnellan (1966) makes for definite descriptions. The two readings of (34) cannot be analysed in terms of scope.

(34) Smith's murderer is insane.

Here the subject noun phrase can be understood to refer to a particular individual who the speaker has in mind, and who could be picked out equally using another description, or it can be understood to denote whoever fits the description, i.e. whoever murdered Smith. On this latter attributive reading the description is an important part of the statement made. If a different description is substituted something different is said (cf. Stalnaker, 1972).

(35) a. The Dean / Fred Smith } deals with complaints about the college.

b. The Dean / Fred Smith } is married to a Tasmanian.

Though Fred Smith may be the present Dean, if he were not he would presumably no longer deal with complaints about the college, whereas he would still be married to a Tasmanian. The predicate in (35a) is relevant to the definite description in a way it is not in (35b). In (35b) it is the particular man who happens to be Dean at the moment who is at issue.

The speaker has no formal way of signalling whether the hearer is to take the description as specific or non-specific. The hearer must divine from the context the speaker's intention, whether the speaker has a particular individual in mind or not. On their direct deictic use demonstrative descriptions apparently only have a specific and therefore wide-scope reading:

(36) a. [holding book in hand] Have you read this book?
b. [pointing to bread] I'd like two of those loaves.

Since the speaker is demonstrating the referent, he clearly has a particular referent in mind. Used anaphorically, though, a demonstrative description can either be specific (37a) or non-specific (37b), depending on the antecedent:

(37) a. Metalworkers were out for ten weeks last year due to a retooling dispute. This strike led to layoffs in other areas of production.
b. Michelin is looking for ten new tyre inspectors. These new employees will be required to work the night shift for the first three weeks.

It has been suggested that since the specific/non-specific ambiguity is not formally marked in English, and since it depends on the speaker's intentions rather than the relation of logical operators, it is pragmatic in nature (Stalnaker, 1972; Ioup, 1977; Klein, 1978). An analysis of specificity which invoked semantic ambiguity would predict that all the articles have two semantic representations. The pragmatic account avoids this need to postulate pairs of formally identical articles. Further, it explains the ambiguity test facts. Normally it is impossible for an anaphor of a semantically ambiguous expression to take a different reading from the antecedent (Zwicky and Sadock, 1975):

(38) John declined a drink and Mary did a Latin noun.

But crossed readings are possible with the articles:

(39) My sister married a doctor, and so did my brother, though now they have children she's no longer practising.

The seeming lack of ambiguity in sentences such as (40) can readily be accounted for by conversational rules.

(40) I am married to an Englishman.

If the speaker is married to an Englishman, then presumably she is acquainted with the particular individual and can supply further identifying descriptions. Thus the specific reading is salient.

### 2.5 *Summary so far*

Demonstrative descriptions used as referring expressions:
(i) have an existential entailment.
(ii) are definite, i.e. the speaker must believe that the hearer knows or can infer the referent.

(iii) locate their referent with respect to the speaker.
(iv) are subject to a matching constraint — the referent must be perceptible in the physical context, have been mentioned previously in the discourse or be salient in the shared context of knowledge and belief (a more restrictive form of definiteness).
(v) when not directly deictic show scope ambiguities in opaque contexts.
(vi) are represented semantically as being non-specific, but may have only a specific reading in context.

### 3.1 *Presentational* this

The most striking feature of presentational *this* is that it seems to correspond to the indefinite rather than to the definite article:

(41) There is { this / #that / a / #the } man who lives upstairs from me who is driving me mad because he jumps rope at 2 a.m. every night.

ok with recognitional 'that'

It cannot occur in any of the contexts given above as diagnostic of definiteness. For sentences (42) through (44) to be appropriate the demonstratives must be construed anaphorically or deictically:

(42) #Big as this gorilla was, he could not lift it.
(43) #This dog is John's.
(44) { #Some / #All } of these men came into the building.

None of the above sentences could occur discourse initially without extra-linguistic clarification. However, presentational *this*, like *a*, frequently does occur discourse initially. It is often used at the beginning of anecdotes:

(45) There was this farmer from Ballycastle who was taking his donkey to market.

Presentational *this* evidently does not observe the matching constraint proposed in section 2.3. The speaker does not expect the hearer to recognise the referent of the description. It shares two other properties with the indefinite article. First, it cannot occur with uniqueness modifiers:

(46) I met { the / #a(n) / #this } richest/only stockbroker at the party.[6]

Uniqueness modifiers require a definite article because the referent of a unique description can be inferred by the addressee. The anomalies in (46) constitute further evidence that presentational *this* is indefinite. Secondly, like *a*, under stress *this* does not retain its presentational sense.[7]

(47) I met thís stockbroker yesterday.

(47) can only have a direct deictic or anaphoric reading. Stressed *this* implies a contrast with *that*, but no opposition is possible in the presentational use. It can only take weak stress.

Like *a* then, it is indefinite, but unlike *a* it does not give rise to scope ambiguities:

(48) I didn't see $\left\{\begin{matrix} \text{a} \\ \#\text{this} \end{matrix}\right\}$ man ahead of me, so I knew I was the winner.

(49) John wants to marry $\left\{\begin{matrix} \text{a} \\ \#\text{this} \end{matrix}\right\}$ bank manager, but he doesn't doesn't know any.

The existential entailment of the description cannot be cancelled. Prince (1978) therefore argues that presentational *this* should be represented semantically as an existential quantifier which always has widest scope. However, in just those transparent contexts in which an indefinite description with *a* is ambiguous, *this* is unambiguous:

(50) a. A teller at the First National makes $300 a week.
b. This teller at the First National makes $300 a week.

While (50a) can be about either a particular teller known to the speaker or about tellers in general, (50b) can only be about a particular teller.[8] Furthermore, if there is nothing more to be said about the referent other than what is contained in the description, or if further description is utterly irrelevant, it is strange to use *this*.

(51) a. John has $\left\{\begin{matrix} \text{a} \\ \#\text{this} \end{matrix}\right\}$ telephone, so you can reach me there.

b. John has $\left\{\begin{matrix} \text{a} \\ \text{this} \end{matrix}\right\}$ weird purple telephone.

(52) I've added $\left\{\begin{matrix} \text{a} \\ \#\text{this} \end{matrix}\right\}$ tablespoon of flour. What do I do next?

(53) a. He put $\left\{\begin{matrix} \text{a} \\ \#\text{this} \end{matrix}\right\}$ 31 cent stamp on, so he must want it to go airmail.

b. He put $\left\{\begin{matrix} \text{a} \\ \text{this} \end{matrix}\right\}$ 31 cent stamp on the envelope, and only realised later that it was worth a fortune because it was unperforated.

If John has a telephone, then a telephone must exist. Scope cannot explain the strangeness of *this* in (51a). If *this* is taken to signal specificity of reference, though, the oddness can be explained. For the purposes of getting hold of someone, all working telephones are equivalent; in our culture telephones are usually quite unremarkable. The point of referring to a telephone in (51a) is to tell the hearer that the speaker is reachable. But the use of *this*, signalling that the speaker has a particular phone in mind, is in contradiction with the point of the sentence. *This* is acceptable in (51b) because the individuality of the particular phone is important. The difference is clear if John is imagined to get a new, non-identical phone. This makes no difference to what is said in (51a), but does to (51b), even if the new phone is still weird and purple, for the speaker has a different referent in mind. It is the token and not the type that is important.[9]

Despite the way I have presented these examples it is not the case that *this* is only used when the referent is going to be further talked about. Examples such as the following are common:

(54) I went to this party on Saturday, and you'll never guess who I saw there. Sandra. And she told me that she had decided to come back to school after all these years. . . .

People often associate presentational *this* with narrative and say that it adds vividness to the story (cf. Lakoff, 1974, who classifies presentational *this* as 'emotional' deixis). If, as I am claiming, *this* forces a specific reading, then the vividness is explained. By using presentational *this* the speaker introduces a new referent from his world into the discourse and requires the addressee to believe in its existence (at least for the purposes of the discourse). The individuality of the referent is being emphasised.

### 3.2 *Restrictive* that

In the second asymmetrical use under discussion the demonstrative always occurs with a restrictive modifier:

(55) a. Only attempt those questions for which you think you know the answers.
b. #Only attempt those questions.

The reference in (55b) can only be understood if it is anaphoric or clarified by the physical context, but (55a) can be used discourse initially without reference to the context. The relative clause or other modifier is vital to the establishment of reference. *This* cannot be used in the non-anaphoric, non-direct-deictic sense:

(56) {Those / #These} British subjects who are resident outside of the United Kingdom are exempt from British taxes.

In this use the demonstrative description is definite, as the following examples show:

(57) Arduous though those tests designed to gauge the stamina of the recruits are, they are passed by equal numbers of men and women.
(58) Those swans which live on Britain's waterways are the Queen's.
(59) {All / Some} of those candidates who pass the written test will be required to take an oral.

The description denotes unambiguously for the hearer since it picks out a unique set. However, once again the matching constraint on demonstratives does not hold. The referent need not have been previously mentioned nor be in the physical context.

The description is also non-specific (attributive). The speaker does not have a particular referent in mind:

(60) Only that income in excess of $5000 earned outside the country will be taxable.
(61) My daughter will marry that man who chooses the right casket.

In (61) the father cannot have decided ahead of time which of the suitors his daughter will marry. The description in (60) and (61) can only refer to such income and such a man. Furthermore, the description is an important part of what is said. Choosing the right casket is understood as qualifying the man as a fitting husband. Even if the man who chooses the right casket were the man who had most recently eaten Welsh rarebit, (61') would be a puzzling statement, given the apparent irrelevance of eating Welsh rarebit to being a good husband:

(61') My daughter will marry that man who has most recently eaten Welsh rarebit.

Though the descriptions in (61) and (61') may denote the same individual, the propositions expressed by the two sentences are not equivalent.

In this respect restrictive *that* resembles the generic, and especially the generic use of the bare plural and mass singular, with which it is often equivalent:

(62) {Those / ø} students who have completed their coursework by the seventh semester are eligible for reduced tuition.

(63) Only $\left\{\begin{matrix}\text{that}\\ \text{ø}\end{matrix}\right\}$ income in excess of $5000 earned outside the country will be taxable.

(See Carlson (1978) for a discussion of the existential and the generic bare plural.) Like generic descriptions, this use of the demonstrative description with *that* does not carry an existential entailment. The description denotes possible individuals, not just actual ones. In (62) there may be no students who fit the description at the time of utterance, but this does not render the sentence false, since there are possible students who would fit the description. In most of the examples above the fact that it is possible individuals that are being denoted is made explicit by the use of the future tense, but the generic present tense can also occur.

## 4. Conclusion

It is now possible to ask why these two uses under discussion are asymmetrical. Why is it that *that/those* and *this/these* cannot be interchanged in the examples given in section 1 as they can in the direct deictic use? In the direct deictic use the demonstrative description is definite and picks out a specific referent either near or far from the speaker. With presentational *this* the description picks out a specific referent, but it is indefinite. With restrictive *that* the description is definite but non-specific. Thus each differs by one feature from the direct deictic use, but they differ from each other in both definiteness and specificity.

A speaker who uses an INDEFINITE description does not presuppose that the hearer will know or be able to infer the referent. If a description is SPECIFIC then the speaker has a particular referent in mind. The combination of specificity and indefiniteness indicates that the speaker is introducing into the discourse something new known to him, though not necessarily to the hearer. The hearer is being instructed that the referent is to be found in the speaker's world, not in the shared world of speaker and hearer. *This/these* expresses proximity to the speaker, while *that/those* expresses distance from the speaker. Clearly only the demonstrative marked for proximity to the speaker is appropriate here. Conversely, the use of a DEFINITE description presupposes that the addressee knows or can pick out what the description denotes and NON-SPECIFICITY indicates that it is the content of the description that is important in determining the referent, not the speaker's intention. Thus the description is oriented away from the speaker. And consistent with this meaning is the demonstrative that expresses distance from the speaker. Thus the two asymmetrical uses can be accounted for as extensions of the direct deictic use.

A question remains as to how the two uses are to be represented in the semantics. It was suggested (section 2.4) that the specific reading is contextually implicated. This avoids the need to have homophonous specific and non-specific articles in the lexicon. Restrictive *that* poses no problem since it only differs from the deictic use of *that* in never having a specific reading, and this can be explained contextually. However, presentational *this* only has a specific reading, and it cannot be argued that it is the context which imposes the specific reading, for in precisely those opaque contexts in which the indefinite article is ambiguous, *this/these* is not (cf. examples (48) and (49)). The non-specific counterpart of presentational *this* is a different lexical item, the indefinite article *a*. Specificity thus seems to be part of the conventional meaning of presentational *this*. It appears that a pragmatic distinction is here being lexicalised.

*Received 20 October 1980*
*Revised version received*
*29 January 1981*

*Department of Linguistics*
*University College London*
*Gower Street*
*London WC1E 6BT*
*England*

## Notes

* I'd like to thank Christopher Lyons, Sally McConnell-Ginet, Pete Siegel, Deirdre Wilson and an anonymous reviewer for their valuable comments.

1. The following examples with *that*, in which the speaker does not assume that the addressee has prior knowledge of the referent, were suggested to me by Pete Siegel:

   (i) Policeman: Was there anyone else at the scene of the crime?
   Witness: No . . . Oh, wait a minute. There was that man in the blue coat who brushed past me as I arrived.

   (ii) A: Would you like to come over for dinner tonight?
   B: Yes, I'd love to . . . Oh, damn! I forgot that that paper on demonstratives is due tomorrow.

   The use of the demonstrative over an indefinite article here serves to focus the discourse on the speaker's private world of recollection. But whereas with presentational *this* the speaker presents a referent from this private world to be shared, in the above examples the speaker seems more to be talking to himself. Typically the speaker will go on to introduce this new referent into the discourse more fully:

   (ii') B: Yes, I'd love to . . . Oh, damn! I forgot that that paper on demonstratives is due tomorrow. I'm giving my class presentation for Ling 401 on demonstratives and I've got to give in the first draft tomorrow. So it looks as if dinner is out for tonight.

   This suggests that the first time the speaker mentions the referent it is not to introduce it to the addressee, but just because it has occurred as a sudden thought.

2. This is in fact a simplified version of the analysis presented by Stockwell *et al.*, who

include the syntactic features generic, specific and [+WH]. They also treat the first and second person pronouns as underlying articles.

3. I am using # rather than * since the examples seem to be semantically anomalous rather than ungrammatical. I also crosshatch examples which are anomalous in the use or context given, although they may be perfectly acceptable in other contexts and uses.
4. The crosshatched examples are acceptable in the list use of *there*, but it is anticipatory *there* which serves as a test for indefiniteness (cf. Rando and Napoli, 1978). Presentational *this* is, of course, acceptable here. I am marking as anomalous the direct deictic use.
5. The following examples, suggested by the anonymous reviewer, appear to be counterexamples to this claim:
   (iii) #Ronnie finally made it to the White House. This first Hollywood star to become President owes his success entirely to the media.
   (iv) #On Monday evenings nobody goes to the Three Horseshoes except George. That only customer usually drinks Campari.
6. I am not considering the use of superlatives as intensifiers:
   (v) {A / This} most beautiful bird has been singing at my bird-feeder.
   Since there is no implication of uniqueness with this use, the indefinite article and presentational *this* are acceptable in (v).
7. Perlmutter (1970) argues that the stressed form of *a* is *one*.
   (vi) A piggy went to market and a piggy stayed at home.
   (vii) Óne piggy went to market and óne piggy stayed at home.
8. Defenders of a scope ambiguity analysis could argue that this example too is structurally ambiguous by invoking a generic operator. But in both cases the verb is in the generic present tense, so only the article seems to be able to provide the generic interpretation that is present in one case and not in the other. This cannot be explained structurally.
9. It was suggested above (p. 812) that the specific/non-specific ambiguity is pragmatic and that the speaker's meaning is inferable from the context. The anomaly of the specific reading of (51a), (52) and (53a) can easily be explained by conversational rules. In these examples the individuality of the referent is unimportant. The use of *this*, marked for specificity, serves to draw attention to the individuality of the referent. But this is in violation of Grice's maxim of Quantity: 'Do not make your contribution more informative than is required' (Grice, 1975). Hence the anomaly of the examples.

## References

Carlson, G. (1978). *Reference to Kinds in English*. Indiana: Indiana University Linguistics Club.

Davidson, D. and G. Harman (eds) (1972). *Semantics of Natural Language*. Dordrecht: Reidel.

Donnellan, K. (1966). Reference and definite descriptions. *Philosophical Review* 75, 281–304.

Fillmore, C. (1975). *Santa Cruz Lectures on Deixis*. Indiana: Indiana University Linguistics Club.

Fodor, J. D. (1976). *The Linguistic Description of Opaque Contexts*. Indiana: Indiana University Linguistics Club.

Grice, H. (1975). Logic and conversation. In P. Cole and J. Morgan (eds), *Syntax and Semantics 3: Speech Acts*, 41–58. New York: Academic Press.

Hawkins, J. (1978). *Definiteness and Indefiniteness*. London: Croom Helm.
Ioup, G. (1977). Specificity and the interpretation of quantifiers. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 1, 223–245.
Jackendoff, R. (1972). *Semantic Interpretation in Generative Grammar*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
Kempson, R. (1975). *Presupposition and the Delimitation of Semantics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Klein, E. (1978). On sentences which report beliefs, desires and other mental attitudes. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Cambrdige University.
Kripke, S. A. (1977). Speaker's reference and semantic reference. *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 2, 255–276.
Lakoff, R. (1974). Remarks on *this* and *that*. *CLS* 10, 345–356.
Lyons, C. (1977). Demonstratives in English. *Belfast Working Papers in Languages and Linguistics* 2.
Partee, B. (1972). Opacity, coreference and pronouns. In D. Davidson and G. Harman (eds), *Semantics of Natural Language*, 415–437. Dordrecht: Reidel.
Perlmutter, D. M. (1970). On the article in English. In M. Bierwisch and K. E. Heidolph (eds) *Progress in Linguistics*, 233–248. The Hague: Mouton.
Postal, P. (1970). On so-called pronouns in English. In R. A. Jacobs and P. S. Rosenbaum (eds), *Readings in Linguistics*, 56–82. Waltham: Ginn.
Prince, E. (1978). This *this*. Unpublished paper presented at the pragmatics workshop, University of Illinois.
Rando, E. and Napoli, D. J. (1978). Definites in *there*-sentences. *Language* 54, 300–313.
Russell, B. (1905). On denoting. *Mind* 14, 479–493.
Stalnaker, R. (1972). Pragmatics. In D. Davidson and G. Harman (eds), *Semantics of Natural Language*, 380–397. Dordrecht: Reidel.
—(1977). Pragmatic presuppositions. In A. Rogers, B. Wall and J. Murphy (eds), *Proceedings of the Texas Conference on Performatives, Presuppositions and Implicatures*, 135–148. Arlington, Virginia: CAL.
Stockwell, R., Schachter, P. and Partee, B. (1973). *The Major Syntactic Structures of English*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
Strawson, P. (1950). On referring. *Mind* 59, 320–344.
Wilson, D. (1975). *Presuppositions and Non-Truth-Conditional Semantics*. New York: Academic Press.
Zwicky, A. and Sadock, J. (1975). Ambiguity tests and how to fail then. In J. Kimball (ed.), *Syntax and Semantics* 4, 1–36. New York: Academic Press.