

Deictic features and clausal association

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While deixis is most studied are the exophoric uses such as in (1), where the demonstrative refers to some entity or aspect of the physical world, language-internal endophoric reference is an equally important research aspect (see e.g. Diessel 1999 and Levinson 2006). Set within the scope of endophoric reference, my research investigates discourse-deictic demonstrative pronouns (2), plus clause-associated formatives like the demonstrative-related complementizer in (3) and the correlative demonstrative in (4). The primary objective is to investigate how these linguistic elements with deictic features are used and interpreted in various contexts, with focus on English and Hungarian.

- (1) *Look at that! (+gesture)*
- (2) a. *I say {this/*that}: we have to go.*
b. {Azt/ ezt} mondjam: mennünk kell. (Hungarian)
'that.ACC this.ACC say.1SG go.IMP.1SG have.to
'I say {that/this}: we have to go.'
- (3) *I say {that/*this} we have to go.*
- (4) {Azt/ #ezt} mondjam, hogy mennünk kell. (Hungarian)
'that.ACC this.ACC say.1SG COMP go.IMP.1SG have.to
'I say that we have to go.'

As in the discourse-domain, physical distance is not readily interpretable, the deictic features have to be "recycled" somehow. Recently, Staps and Rooryck (2023) proposed that in English, this process results in the emergence of "conceptual distance" and "addressee involvement" as meaning components. In their framework these aspects explain the pattern in (2a) and (3).

For Hungarian, the recycling process is arguably different. Unlike English in (2a), Hungarian allows for discourse-deictic cataphoric reference to a clause with either a proximal or a distal demonstrative, see (2b).

Additionally, in (3) and (4) we see more grammaticalized elements. Staps and Rooryck (2023) argue that the +DISTAL feature remains active even in the complementizer in (3), which is traditionally considered a fully grammaticalized syntactic element. Subordination in Hungarian may involve a cataphoric clause-associated demonstrative, which is also standardly analyzed as an expletive element in Hungarian (Kenesei 1994). However, some researchers have likewise expressed doubts about its purported lack of semantic content (e.g. Szűcs 2022). I endorse this latter view and assert that even though the referential aspect of the demonstrative is weak, the deictic components have been recycled to signal cognitive prominence in discourse, proximal being more prominent. I support this view with intuitive as well as corpus-based data and argue that such an approach can explain the patterns in (2)-(4).

Overall, understanding the interaction of the ontological nature and the feature-interpretation of deictic forms provides valuable insights into both syntactic and discourse-structures.

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