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Metarepresentational Demonstratives in Digo¹

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1. Metarepresentation in Relevance Theory

According to Relevance Theory, thoughts and utterances can both be viewed as representations: a thought is an abstract mental representation of an actual or hypothetical state of affairs and an utterance is a public representation of a thought. When a speaker represents her own thought with an utterance, and the thought is one which she believes to be true, the utterance is said to be used descriptively. That is, the speaker is asserting the truth of the proposition expressed. But when a speaker produces an utterance that is a representation of any other kind of thought, such as a thought attributed to someone else, a thought which is desirable but not known to be true, or a thought that is a representation of an incomplete proposition (which cannot therefore have a truth value), the utterance is said to be used interpretively (see Sperber & Wilson 1986: 224-254).

Interpretive uses of utterances are cases of metarepresentation, which, according to Wilson (2000: 414), involves ‘a higher order representation with a lower order representation embedded inside it.’ Thus a question consists of a public representation (an interrogative utterance) which represents an abstract representation (an incomplete thought, or a thought whose truth-value is not known). Metarepresentation can also involve only thoughts or only utterances, for example, reported speech uses one utterance (the report) to represent another utterance (the original locution).

Using the concepts of interpretive use and metarepresentation provided by Relevance Theory, various linguistic constructions,

including sentence type (word order), verbal mood, particles and intonation, have been analysed as indicating that (part of) the utterance to which they contribute is being interpretively or meta-representationally used.² In this paper, I will present an analysis of a particular type of demonstrative pronoun in Digo, a Bantu language³ spoken in Kenya and Tanzania, which I will argue encodes meta-representational use. The data for this study is drawn from a corpus of approximately 14,000 words of non-translated text.

2. Data

2.1 Types of demonstratives in Digo

Bantu languages typically have at least three types of demonstratives, which are often described as follows: proximal (close to the speaker), distal (far from the speaker or the addressee) and non-proximal (close to the addressee, but also used when the speaker can't identify the referent specifically). Some Bantu languages have more than these three types of demonstratives, and often each type of demonstrative has a variant form which differs from the 'basic' form distributionally as well as structurally.

The characterisations of the Digo demonstratives as proximal, distal and non-proximal hold, more or less, when they are used in conversations in which the interlocutors are physically co-present. But in narratives, where physical deixis is not always relevant, they often have different functions. These differences correspond to the distinction between deictic functions of demonstrative expressions on the one hand, and anaphoric and discourse-deictic functions on the other, as described by Cornish (this volume).

For example, in narratives, non-proximal demonstratives contribute to the coherence of a text when there is a discontinuity, for example a change of location or a lapse of time. A typical construction in which to find non-proximal demonstratives is tail-head linkage. In this kind of construction, there is discontinuity between the contents of two adjacent clauses and the final information in the first clause is repeated, using a different construction, at the start of the second clause. When a referent that was mentioned in the first clause is mentioned again in the second

clause, it is often modified by a non-proximal demonstrative. This redundancy serves to indicate a conceptual boundary between the two clauses, indicating a new development in the narrative, and so I will use the term ‘developmental’ to describe this type of demonstrative.

In the following example, tail-head linkage occurs at a change of location in the narrative. All of the demonstratives in this example have been highlighted and the type of each has been given in parenthesis in the modified literal translation which follows. Most are of the distal type, but a developmental demonstrative is used in the underlined clause to refer to the location mentioned in the previous clause, thereby bridging the conceptual gap caused by the change of location.

- (1) Wauya kaya **yuya** mutu, akafika **phara** kaya wasagala **ye** hata saa mbiri, achiuka achiphiya **kuratu** pangani. Ariphofika **hipho**, wakpwera dzulu ya muhi kulola **pharatu** phatulukirapho fisi.

*He returned home **that** (distal) man, he arrived **there** (distal) at home he remained **this one** (proximal, short form) until eight o'clock, then he left and went to **those same** (distal, variant form) caves. When he arrived **there** (developmental), he climbed to the top of a tree to observe **that same place** (distal, variant form) from which had emerged the hyena.*

In addition to these three types of demonstratives, Digo has a further type which I am labelling ‘metarepresentational’ and which will be the focus of this paper. This type of demonstrative has no variant form and consists of a noun class prefix (indicating one of the 14 noun classes, or genders, to which each Digo noun belongs) and the invariable ending *-no*. The *-no* ending also occurs in variant forms of some independent personal pronouns which have a similar distribution to metarepresentational demonstratives and which I will therefore call ‘metarepresentational pronouns’.⁴ The first person singular pronoun *mimi* has a metarepresentational form *mino*, the first person plural pronoun *sisi* has a metarepresentational form *sino*, and the second person plural pronoun *mwimwi* has a metarepresentational form *mwino*.

The complete list of all four types of demonstrative are given in the table below.⁵

Noun Class	Proximal	Distal	Developmental (non-proximal)	Metarepresentational
1 variant	hiye ye	yuya, huya yuyatu	hiyu yuyu, yu	yuno
2 variant	hinya aha	hara (hawa) (h)aratu	hinyo nyo, o	hano
3 variant	hinyu	hura (h)uratu	hinyo nyo	huno
4 variant	hii	hira (h)iratu	hiyo yo	hino
5 variant	hiri riri	rira riratu	hiro riro, ro	rino
6 variant	higa gaga	gara garatu	higo gago, go	gano
7 variant	hichi chichi, chi	chira chiratu	hicho chicho, cho	chino
8 variant	hivi vivi, vi	vira viratu	hivyo vivyoy, vyo	vino
9 variant	hii	hira (h)iratu	hiyo yo	hino
10 variant	hizi zizi	zira ziratu	hizo zizo, zo	zino
11 variant	hinyu	hura (h)uratu	hinyo nyo, o	huno
16 variant	hipha phapha, pha	phara pharatu	hipho phapho, pho	phano
17 variant	hiku kuku, ku	kura kuratatu	hiko kuko, ko	kuno
18 variant	himu mumu, mu	mura muratu	himo mumo, mo	muno

Table 1: Digo demonstratives

2.2 Metarepresentational demonstratives in conversation

In conversation, metarepresentational demonstratives are typically used to draw attention to an object or place which the speaker believes the

addressee should be capable of representing mentally, even if he does not currently have such a representation in mind. In relevance theory, an assumption of which an individual is currently capable of forming a mental representation is described as being ‘manifest’ to that individual (Sperber & Wilson 1995: 39). If all of the interlocutors in a speech event are capable of forming a mental representation of an assumption, it is said to be ‘mutually manifest’. Similarly, (a representation of) an entity can be manifest and mutually manifest in the same way as an assumption, if an individual is capable of forming a mental representation of it at a given time. It is not necessary for an assumption or an entity to actually be mentally represented for it to be manifest, it only needs to be capable of being mentally represented; there can therefore be degrees of manifestness. An entity which is highly salient in an individual’s cognitive environment is *strongly manifest*, and an entity which is not salient in an individual’s cognitive environment is *weakly manifest*.

The basic function of metarepresentational demonstratives, I suggest, is to make their referents more manifest to the addressee.

What does this mean in practice? Let us look first at the use of metarepresentational demonstratives in conversations where the interlocutors are physically co-present. In contrast to the referent of a non-proximal demonstrative, the referent of a metarepresentational demonstrative may be within sight of both the speaker and the addressee, although not necessarily near to either, so long as it is potentially identifiable to both (i.e. mutually manifest). For example, when I asked a Digo man if he knew what had caused a power cut, he told me ‘Look at the colobus *there*’⁶ using the metarepresentational demonstrative *phano* and indicating the smouldering body of a colobus monkey on an electrical transformer about ten metres away, which I had until then failed to notice. The electrical transformer was only weakly manifest to me, and by using a metarepresentational demonstrative the speaker made it more manifest. The distal demonstrative *phara* could have been used, but only if the speaker believed that I was already aware of the electrical transformer, that is, if the speaker believed that the transformer was strongly manifest to me.

It is not always necessary for the referent of a metarepresentational demonstrative to be physically present. On another occasion a Digo man said the following to me:⁷

(2) “Unatanbukira **hino** kofiya? N’chere nayo.”

you_are_remembering MD.9 hat.9 I_am_still with_it.9

“Do you remember that hat? I still have it.”

The conversation took place not long after Christmas, and we had been talking about the Christmas party that I hosted the previous year. At this party, I had given the speaker a hat, and it was this hat that he was telling me about. The hat, along with everything else associated with the previous year’s Christmas party, was only weakly manifest to me at that time, and so the speaker made it more manifest by using the meta-representational demonstrative *hino*.

The decision as to whether to use a metarepresentational demonstratives in conversation is thus not determined by the physical proximity of entity being referred to relative to the speaker or the addressee, as is the case with the other three types of demonstratives. Rather, the decision to use a metarepresentational demonstrative depends on the speaker’s assessment of how manifest a mental representation of that entity is, with the aim of making it more manifest. Metarepresentational demonstratives therefore modify representations of representations, hence the label ‘metarepresentational’. In a sense all anaphoric expressions are metarepresentational, but the difference between metarepresentational demonstratives and the other types of demonstratives lies in the fact that their use in conversation is not dependent on spatial deixis, that is, on the physical location of the entity relative to the interlocutors, but on the psychological salience of a mental representation of that entity. This characterisation will be discussed further below.

2.2 *Metarepresentational demonstratives in narrative texts*

Metarepresentational demonstratives can refer to mutually manifest entities in narrative texts as well as in conversation. This is illustrated in the following example, in which the ‘speakers’ are characters in a story; the speakers and the house are both physically present, that is, manifest to the addressee, but their identity is not yet known to the addressee. The use of metarepresentational demonstratives when referring to the speakers and the house makes them both more manifest. The meta-

representational demonstratives and the metarepresentational first person plural independent pronoun have been highlighted.

- (3) “Ichikala u mwanadamu masikirogo naagasikize vinono, mana **sino** pepho za kucha hundatuluka **hino** nyumba. Huna nyumba ya mutsi, ndiyomenya, ela siyo **hino, hino** ni ya usiku.”

if you_are human_being ears_your let_them_hear well, for MD.1pl spirits of dawn we_will_come_out_of MD.9 house.9 we_have house.9 of daytime which_we_will_enter, but it_is_not MD.9, MD.9 is of night

*“If you are a human let your ears hear well, for we spirits of the dawn will come out of **this** house. We have a house for the daytime, which we go into, but it is not **this one, this one** is of the night.”*

Of 62 sentences containing metarepresentational demonstratives in my corpus of narrative texts, 55 (89%) represent direct speech or thoughts, as in the example above.⁸ In a narrative text, this can be thought of as the narrator representing an utterance or thought of one of the participants.

Over half of the speeches and thoughts containing metarepresentational demonstratives either constitute information questions (25 occurrences) or provide the background to information questions (8 occurrences). In contrast there were only 14 information questions in the corpus which contained only proximal, distal or developmental demonstratives. It is striking that all of the questions involving metarepresentational demonstratives also express a degree of surprise, shock, or disbelief on the part of the speaker, whilst the information questions involving other demonstratives are simply requests for information (‘Where has so-and-so gone?’ ‘What were you looking for in the forest?’ etc.). Metarepresentational demonstratives can also be used in these ways in conversation, but I do not have statistical evidence as to how common such uses are; from this point on, all the examples will be drawn from narrative texts.

The following four examples illustrate the way in which questions and surprise are expressed simultaneously in direct speech containing metarepresentational demonstratives.

Example (4) is an interrogative clause containing two metarepresentational demonstratives, *yuno* agreeing with *mutu* (‘person’ in noun class 1) and *zino* agreeing with *pesa* (‘money’ in noun class 10).

The speaker cannot believe that a person who previously had been poor now has enough money to pay two hundred workers at ten times the going rate. Similarly, in example (5) the speaker is surprised that the subject (indicated by the metarepresentational demonstrative *yuno* used predicatively), who went to speak to her brothers, has been gone for over two hours.

- (4) “Mutu **yuno**, **zino** pesa aziphahaphi?”⁹
 person MD1, MD10 money.10 he_it_got_where
“Where did that man (of all people) get that (much) money from?”
- (5) “**Yuno** achiyephiya kpwendabisha, mbona saa zinakala nyinji?”
 MD.1 who_went to_go_talk, why(emphatic) hours they_are_becoming many
“That one who went to talk, why has so much time passed by?”

In example (6), the metarepresentational demonstrative *yuno* occurs in a clause which provides the background to the question in the final clause. The speaker is shocked that when he asked his wealthy brother for money he was only given kerosene. Oliver Kröger (p.c.) has suggested that it is perhaps surprising that *mafuha* ‘kerosene’ is not also indexed as metarepresentational, since it is also an element of shock. It is possible to use a class 6 metarepresentational demonstrative with *mafuha* here, but perhaps the reason why only the class 1 metarepresentational demonstrative was used is that what most shocked the speaker was the fact that it was *his brother* who gave him the kerosene; in Digo culture family bonds and obligations are very strong, and a wealthy brother would be expected to provide for his poorer siblings.

- (6) “Pho **yuno** kanipha vitu, ananipha mafuha ga taa bahi, go mafuha ga taa ndo n'yarya?”
 dem.16 MD.1 he_not_give_me things, he_gives_me oil.6 of lamp only, dem.6 oil.6 of.6 lamp exclamative I_am_going_to_eat
“There that one didn't give me anything, he just gave me kerosene, am I supposed to eat that kerosene?”

Finally, example (7) contains *yuno* (modifying ‘my_wife’ in noun class 1) in an interrogative clause. The background to this clause is the

surprising discovery that an antelope which the speaker had trapped has been replaced by a woman's corpse. The speaker describes this using the metarepresentational first person singular pronoun *mino* and the class 8 metarepresentational demonstrative *vino*, which is used here as a time adverbial 'now'. The author could have used another first person singular pronoun *mimi* and other terms for 'now', such as the class 8 proximal demonstrative *vivi*, but the situation as a whole is surprising and the repetition of metarepresentational forms expresses this. The class 16 proximal demonstrative *hipha* is presumably used because the speaker is standing at the precise location where he left the antelope and has just found a corpse instead.

- (7) Yuya mutu waangalala sana mwakpwe rohoni, “Nimuambedze **yuno** mkpwazangu? Na **mino** che n'namanya kala kulungu ndiye wangu na ndiye chemreha hipha nkamuika hipha; nkalunga mkpwazangu, ela **vino** kulungu kapho, ye maiti nchiyemuona na fisi ndiye achiyeikpwa hipha!”

dem.1 person.1 he_was_amazed much in_his spirit, what_can_I_say_to_her MD.1 my_wife and MD.1sg focus I_know that antelope it_was mine and it_was that_it_brought (hodiernal) dem.16 (here) I_put (hodiernal)_it dem.16 (here); I_approached (hodiernal) my_wife, but MD.8 (now) antelope it_is_not_there, dem.1 corpse which_I_saw_it with hyena it_is what_has_been_put dem.16 (here)

*The man was amazed. “What can I say to **that** wife of mine? Now **I** know that the antelope was mine and it was me who put it here; I went to my wife, but **now** the antelope is not here, and the corpse I saw with the hyena has been put here instead!”*

A further 12 clauses in the corpus containing metarepresentational demonstratives occur in commands and exhortations, as in example (8) below. These are also cases of metarepresentation, since a command or exhortation can be thought of as a representation of a desirable proposition, that is, a proposition which the speaker would like to be true.

- (8) “We bwana, usinicheleweshe **phano**.”

you sir, do_not_make_me_late MD.16

*“Hey you, don't make me wait **here**.”*

In example (9) the metarepresentational form of the first person plural pronoun *sino* is used even though this is not part of the command. However it is part of a clause which provides the basis for the command, since there was an agreement that whoever killed Mwanyika, a serpent, would be rewarded by being given the woman as his wife. In this respect the use of *sino* in (9) is similar to the use of metarepresentational demonstratives in clauses which provide the background to information questions, as in example (6) above.

(9) “**Sino** hwaolaga Mwanyika. Hunataka **yuno** mwanachetu.”

MD.1pl, we_killed Mwanyika. we_want MD.1 young_woman.1

“*We killed Mwanyika. We want **that** young woman.*”

Of the remaining metarepresentational demonstratives which occur in direct speech, and the few which do not occur in direct speech, most express emphasis (as is the case in (9) above) or indicate the peak or conclusion of a story. In example (10) below, a father-in-law is chiding his son-in-law. The context is that the son-in-law promised to visit the father-in-law on the previous Sunday to pay part of his bridewealth debt, but he did not show up; now he has arrived late and without the money. By using a metarepresentational demonstrative and two metarepresentational first person singular pronouns, the speaker effectively expresses his surprise and disapproval of the son-in-law’s behaviour.

(10) Rero Jumane **hino** ndiyo uchiyokpwedza, na unaamba kuna chitu. Sambu **mino** nimanye, neno rani **mino**?

today.9 Tuesday MD.9 it_is on_which_you_come, and you_are_saying you_do_not_have thing. Now MD.1sg let_me_know, word.5 what.5 MD.1sg

*Today on **this** Tuesday is when you come, and you say you have nothing. Now **I** want to know, what should **I** say?*

A few metarepresentational demonstratives which do not occur in direct speech occur in speech orienters to introduce songs; songs are used in traditional stories to indicate pivotal events, such as the discovery of a crime, or to summarise the situation as it stands at that point in the narrative. In example (11) below, the metarepresentational demonstrative *huno* modifies *Wira wenye ariouimba* ‘the actual song that she was singing’ which then follows.

- (11) Wira wenye ariouimba kala ni **huno** wa kusunoneka: ...
 song.11 itself.11 which_he_sang_it past copula MD.11 of.11 to_mourn
*The actual song that she was singing was **this one** of mourning: ...*

3. Semantic characterisation of metarepresentational demonstratives

We have seen that in conversation metarepresentational demonstratives are typically used to make their referents more manifest, and that in narratives, metarepresentational demonstratives occur in reported speech and thoughts, information questions, expressions of surprise, exhortations and commands, and for emphasis. In this section, I will discuss the implications of this distribution. I will first propose a semantic characterisation of metarepresentational demonstratives which accounts for their conversational uses, and then discuss the narrative uses. I will conclude by proposing a unified semantic characterisation of metarepresentational demonstratives in Digo using another relevance theoretic notion: procedural encoding.

3.1 Metarepresentational analysis

When metarepresentational demonstratives are used in conversations where the interlocutors are physically co-present, they make the intended referent more manifest to the addressee, regardless of whether it is physically present. In what way is this a metarepresentational function? Manifestness is a property of mental representations of referents rather than a property of referents themselves. When a metarepresentational demonstrative is used in conversation, it is used to indicate an entity that is mutually manifest to the speaker and the addressee and to make that entity more manifest to the addressee. Thus metarepresentational demonstratives modify representations of representations independently of the physical locations relative to the interlocutors of the entities to which they refer.

In narratives, spatial deixis is not relevant in the way that it is in conversations where the interlocutors are physically co-present, and so metarepresentational demonstratives cannot be defined in opposition to other types of demonstratives which depend for their conditions of use on spatial deixis. However, the contexts in which metarepresentational demonstratives occur in narrative texts (reported speech and thoughts, information questions, expressions of surprise, exhortations and commands, and for emphasis) are all examples of metarepresentational use. In discussing the use of metarepresentational demonstratives in narratives, I first want to consider the possibility that they encode a specific kind of metarepresentation, such as reportative, exclamative or interrogative use, but can be used in a more general way under certain conditions.

Other cases have been discussed in the literature in which an expression which has a specific primary meaning can also be used in related ways under certain conditions. For example, in some languages markers of reported speech and interrogative use can also be used to indicate surprise. Blass (2000: 46) explains the use of the reportative markers *rɛ* in Sissala and *-mis* in Turkish to indicate surprise as follows:

the relationship between reporting and surprise lies in the wish to be distanced from the situation the speaker is describing. As a reportative (echoic) marker expresses non-commitment on the side of the speaker, so the speaker wishes not to commit herself to the truth of the information gained by surprise.

Similarly Nicolle (2000) shows on the one hand how the Swahili interrogative marker *je* can also be used to indicate surprise, and on the other hand that the Amharic particle *ete* which only occurs in interrogative clauses is in fact an exclamative marker.

However, these expressions differ from metarepresentational demonstratives in Digo in important respects. Sissala *rɛ*, Turkish *-mis* and Swahili *je* all have a primary function as either a reportative or interrogative marker, and only indicate surprise under specific conditions. For example, *je* only ever occurs in interrogative clauses and only indicates surprise or irony (another interpretive and hence metarepresentational use of language) under specific conditions, such as when the interrogative clause contains a *wh*-question word. Although the occurrence of a *wh*-question word makes *je* functionally redundant as a question marker, it does not alter the fact that *je* remains an

interrogative marker even when it is used in additional ways. Conversely, although Amharic *ete* is restricted to interrogative clauses, it only ever occurs in clauses that are marked as interrogative in some other way, and only to express surprise; it is therefore an exclamative marker with a restricted distribution.

Unlike *rɛ*, *-mis* and *je*, there is no single function which is common to all uses of metarepresentational demonstratives in Digo, and unlike *ete* they are not restricted to a specific clause type. Although most of the occurrences are in reported speech and/or interrogative clauses, and there is often an expression of surprise, metarepresentational demonstratives also occur in conversation, and in non-reported speech, including peaks, culminations and speech orienters, where there is no expression of surprise. The reason why so many metarepresentational demonstratives occur in reported speech in Digo narratives, and in particular in interrogative clauses, may be that a rhetorical feature of Digo storytelling is to highlight important or surprising events in a story by having one of the major participants express them verbally. Metarepresentational demonstratives are therefore not exclamative markers with restricted distribution (like Amharic *ete*), nor are they reportative markers that can also be used for other functions (like Sissala *rɛ* and Turkish *-mis*), nor are they interrogative markers that can express surprise (like Swahili *je*); rather they are non-specific metarepresentational markers.

3.2 *Restriction on metalinguistic use*

Having described metarepresentational demonstratives as non-specific metarepresentational markers, I now want to introduce an important restriction on this non-specific characterisation. Although metarepresentational demonstratives occur in a variety of metarepresentational contexts, they are not used to mark the *metalinguistic* use of an expression; that is, they do not indicate that an utterance is a representation of the *form* of another utterance rather than its content.

If, as I have argued, metarepresentational demonstratives are non-specific metarepresentational markers, why should there be this restriction? The answer, I believe, lies in the restricted surface-syntactic scope of demonstratives.

Fretheim (2000: 54) argues that particles have two kinds of scope: logical-semantic and surface-syntactic, and that particles with a proposition as their logical-semantic scope must have as their surface-syntactic scope a linguistic expression which encodes a logical form capable of being pragmatically enriched to yield a propositional form. Thus, the surface-syntactic scope of the Norwegian non-truthconditional particles *altså* and *da* is a clause or a fragment of a clause which can be pragmatically enriched to yield a propositional form, and their logical-semantic scope is a proposition. A similar situation holds with respect to the Swahili interrogative particle *je*. When it is suffixed to a verb its logical-semantic scope is the verb and the clause containing the verb must be pragmatically enriched to be interpreted as a *wh*-question – typically ‘how’ with intransitive verbs and ‘what’ with transitive verbs lacking an overt object. When *je* occurs as a free morpheme in either clause-initial or clause-final position, it takes the entire proposition expressed by the clause as its logical-semantic scope, and gives rise to a polar interrogative interpretation.

The logical-semantic scope of metarepresentational demonstratives is also propositional, but their surface-syntactic scope is the noun phrase which they determine. Metarepresentational demonstratives are, after all, demonstratives and not particles (as this term is usually understood). Thus, their logical-semantic scope does not appear to be derived from their surface-syntactic scope. Metalinguistic markers represent form rather than content, and therefore the linguistic expression which is marked as being metalinguistically represented corresponds to the surface-syntactic scope of the metalinguistic marker. The surface-syntactic scope of metarepresentational demonstratives is irrelevant as far as their use as metarepresentational markers is concerned (although not, of course, as far as their referential demonstrative use is concerned), and so there is no way of identifying the linguistic expression whose form an utterance containing a metarepresentational demonstrative is meant to represent.

This also explains why a metarepresentational demonstrative and a non-metarepresentational demonstrative can co-occur in a single clause.¹⁰ Each has its own referential scope which is dependent on their surface-syntactic scope (i.e. the noun phrase which they determine), but the metarepresentational function of a metarepresentational demonstrative is independent of this surface-syntactic scope and

expresses a higher-level explicature which is logically independent of the propositional content expressed by the clause.

3.3 Procedural analysis

The final question I wish to address is the nature of the information encoded by metarepresentational demonstratives. Relevance Theory recognises two basic kinds of linguistically encoded information: conceptual information, which contributes directly to the content of a mental representation, and procedural information, which constrains the inferential processes which an addressee must perform in order to recover the explicatures or implicatures which a speaker intends to communicate. I will argue below that metarepresentational demonstratives encode two distinct types of procedural information.

Wilson & Sperber (1993) argue that pronouns encode procedural information which constrains the inferential processes involved in reference assignment. Since reference assignment contributes to the propositional form recovered, pronouns are treated as exponents of procedural encoding which contribute to truth-conditional meaning.¹¹ The idea that pronouns and other types of referring expression might encode procedures predates Wilson & Sperber (1993), however. For example, Hawkins (1978:17, cited in Matsui 2000:4) suggested that the use of the definite article acts as “an instruction to the hearer to locate the referent of the definite NP” by searching for it in “the appropriate, pragmatically identifiable, set”, and Ariel (1988: 68) proposed that,

instead of claiming that an expression of type x is processed in a certain way... we view the processing procedure associated with each form as its inherent definition. In other words, referring expressions are no more than guidelines for retrievals.

Demonstratives are also referring expressions and so can be characterised as encoding procedural constraints on truth-conditional content, specifically, the identification or retrieval of the intended referent. Just as pronouns in English encode information about person, number and gender, demonstratives in Digo encode information about the noun class of the intended referent. But metarepresentational demonstratives (and metarepresentational personal pronouns) not only help to constrain the recovery of the intended propositional content of an

utterance, they also exhibit a specific distribution in that they occur exclusively in linguistic content that is being metarepresentationally (but not metalinguistically) used. There are three possible explanations for this.

The first possibility is that metarepresentational demonstratives encode nothing more than information constraining the identification of the intended referent and just happen to occur exclusively in metarepresentational contexts. This is logically untenable. For a speaker to know when to use a metarepresentational demonstrative requires her to recognise that the utterance of which it is a part is a metarepresentation, and conversely, when a metarepresentational demonstrative is used the addressee will similarly be aware that the utterance of which it is part is a metarepresentation. Thus, simply by virtue of having been used, the metarepresentational demonstrative will have conveyed the information that the utterance of which it is a part is a metarepresentation.

The suggestion that metarepresentational demonstratives just happen to occur exclusively in metarepresentational contexts also runs counter to a basic tenet of Relevance Theory: additional processing effort is always justified by the communication of additional cognitive effects. The occurrence of a fourth type of demonstrative in Digo, in addition to the proximal, distal and developmental types, necessarily increases the complexity of the system as a whole and thereby increases processing effort. This would only be justified either if additional cognitive effects result or if the use of this additional kind of demonstrative enables addressees to derive cognitive effects with less effort. The conclusion therefore must be that metarepresentational demonstratives contribute some kind of information;¹² the question is, what kind of information.

One possibility is that metarepresentational demonstratives encode conceptual information. Although it has been proposed that some linguistic expressions encode both procedural and conceptual information (Nicolle 1998; Hall 2004: 209), this is not the case with metarepresentational demonstratives. There is no specific concept such as “surprise” that can be brought to consciousness, and metarepresentation is a theoretical construct which is not consciously available to native speakers.

This leads us to conclude that metarepresentational demonstratives encode procedural information. In addition to constraining the identification of truth-conditional content, metarepresentational demonstratives also constrain the identification of what are termed

‘higher-level explicatures’, which concern the speaker’s attitude to the proposition expressed. Rather than directly encoding information such as ‘the speaker wants to make the referent more manifest’ or ‘the speaker believes the proposition expressed is surprising’, metarepresentational demonstratives merely make such an interpretation more salient. That is, metarepresentational demonstratives activate the range of possible hypotheses compatible with metarepresentational use, leaving the addressee to infer the precise interpretation based on the utterance interpretation context and on information encoded by other means, such as sentence type and intonation (see Ifantidou 2000: 136).

4. Conclusion

Various markers of metarepresentational use have been proposed, including sentence type, verbal mood, particles and intonation, but not, to my knowledge, demonstratives. The class of demonstratives in Digo which I have termed ‘metarepresentational’ occur in conversation and in narrative texts. In conversation, they make their referents more manifest, that is, they increase the salience of a mental representation of the referent in the mind of the addressee. In narratives, they occur in reported speech and thoughts, information questions, expressions of surprise, exhortations and commands, and for emphasis, but they are not specific markers of any one of these functions. Instead, I argued that they are non-specific metarepresentational markers, which nonetheless do not indicate metalinguistic use.

As the term ‘metarepresentational demonstrative’ suggests, metarepresentational demonstratives are both metarepresentational markers and demonstratives, and so I argued that they encode two distinct kinds of procedural constraints. As demonstratives, they encode procedural information constraining the identification of the intended referent, thereby guiding the addressee to the intended propositional content of the utterances of which they are part; as metarepresentational markers, they encode procedural information which activates the range of possible hypotheses compatible with metarepresentational use, thereby making such interpretations more salient.

The demonstrative systems of Bantu languages remain a relatively undescribed area, and this paper has only looked at one type of demonstrative in a single language. As part of a system, meta-

representational demonstratives interact with the other types of demonstrative and a complete description must take account of what motivates the choice of one type of demonstrative over another. For this, a description of each type of demonstrative, and its variant forms, must be provided, and other variables, such as the relative order of demonstrative and noun, must be considered.

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Notes

- ¹ I am grateful to Francis Cornish, Oliver Kröger, Kaja Borthen and Nana Aba Appiah Amfo for helpful comments on a draft of this paper; all remaining faults are my own.
- ² Some of these studies were published in the volume *Pragmatic Markers and Propositional Attitude* which was edited by Gisle Andersen and Thorstein Fretheim, and to which Thorstein Fretheim contributed a paper. I will refer frequently to papers published in this volume.
- ³ Bantu languages are spoken throughout sub-Saharan Africa and constitute the largest sub-group of the Bantoid branch of the Benue-Congo group of the Niger-Congo language family. Digo (or Chidigo) is classified as E.73 (Guthrie 1967-71)

or North-East Coast, Sabaki (Nurse 1999). Research into Digo was conducted in Kenya under Research Permit No. OP.13/001/17 C 180/20 issued by the Government of Kenya to BTL (Bible Translation and Literacy). For an overview of Digo grammar see Nicolle (2004).

- ⁴ I recorded a total of 114 metarepresentational personal pronouns, all but two of which were in the first person.
- ⁵ The numbers in the first column are the established way of labelling Bantu noun classes. They refer to the reconstructed noun class system in Proto-Bantu, which has not been retained in its entirety in Digo, hence the gaps in the table (noun classes 12 and 13 are no longer productive, class 14 has merged with class 11, and class 15 is used for non-finite verb forms and does not have demonstrative forms). Classes 1 and 2 indicate singular and plural human referents respectively, and classes 16, 17 and 18 indicate precise, approximate and interior locations respectively. Class 11 includes elongated objects and qualities, but the semantic basis of other noun classes is often less obvious: classes 3 to 10 include various kinds of objects, with the odd number noun classes usually indicating singular and the even number noun classes usually indicating plural or mass nouns.
- ⁶ This utterance is an interrogative, and as we shall see below, metarepresentational demonstratives often occur in interrogative clauses; however it would also have been acceptable in a declarative clause such as “The colobus there caused the power cut.”
- ⁷ In the glosses, metarepresentational demonstratives are abbreviated as MD followed by the appropriate noun class number, e.g. ‘MD.9’ or person in the case of pronouns, e.g. MD.1pl. Other demonstratives are abbreviated simply as ‘dem’ regardless of which type they are as these are not the focus of the discussion. The noun class of the coreferential noun will also be given to clarify the reference, e.g. ‘house.9’. Because of the highly agglutinative nature of Digo, the glosses provided are word-for-word rather than morpheme-for-morpheme.
- ⁸ I recorded a total of 114 metarepresentational demonstratives and the same number of metarepresentational personal pronouns (there were often two or more per sentence). The total number of proximal, distal, and textual demonstratives in the corpus was approximately 850.
- ⁹ This example illustrates the fact that metarepresentational demonstratives used attributively can either precede or follow the noun which they modify. The precise function of this variation in word order, or the extent to which it is a case of free (pragmatically unmotivated) variation, is yet to be established.
- ¹⁰ As in example (6) where we find *Pho* (class 16, developmental demonstrative, short form) and *yuno* (class 1, metarepresentational demonstrative) together.
- ¹¹ Procedural encoding was originally posited in relation to the derivation of implicatures (Blakemore 1987), and hence all procedural markers were viewed as non-truth-conditional. The notion has subsequently been extended to any kind of inferred meaning, and since reference assignment is an inferential process which has a truth-conditional outcome, it is possible to characterise certain procedural markers as truth-conditional.
- ¹² But see Bezuidenhout (2004) for an alternative analysis.