Deixis of Manner, Quality and Degree: Neglected Subcategories of Demonstratives

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Demonstratives are a subclass of deictic expressions, whose reference can only be established relative to a point of orientation (“origo”). More often than not the use of these expressions is accompanied by a pointing or mimicking gesture for the purpose of establishing a joint focus of attention between speaker and addressee(s). The semantic structure of these expressions is a very simple one, comprising as it does only two dimensions of meaning: (a) a deictic dimension *strictu sensu*, locating a referent in terms of distance, visibility and position relative to a center of orientation and (b) an ontologically dimension, identifying the referent as an entity (human being or object), a location, a direction, a time, etc.

Whereas the aforementioned ontological dimensions have been discussed in great detail in both language-specific and cross-linguistic studies (cf. Anderson & Keenan, 1985; Diessel, 1999; Himmelmann, 1997; Heine & Kouteva, 2002; Dixon, 2003, Krasnoukhova, 2012), three dimensions considered in this paper have been grossly neglected and have only recently been subjected to more systematic analyses (cf. E. Koenig, 2012; C. Umbach, to appear), in contrast to the occasional observations made on “particles” like German *so* or Italian (*co)* in the last 30 years or so.

In the first part of my paper I will present a typological sketch of demonstratives of manner, of quality and of degree, showing that these three ontological dimensions and two or three deictic terms are differentiated in a variety of languages, so that the situation in Germanic languages where all three ontological dimensions can be encoded by a single expression (e.g. German *so*; English *so*) and no deictic distinctions are made is by no means typical. It will be shown that different deictic systems are also found in these three domains and that the relevant expressions are far more versatile in their distribution than is assumed by the usual categorization into adnominal, nominal, adverbial, identificational demonstratives.

In the second part of my paper I will discuss another neglected aspect of the relevant demonstratives, viz. their role in processes of grammaticalization and thus in the genesis and development of various grammatical categories. The well-known extensions in the use of demonstratives from exophoric to anaphoric and cataphoric will be analyzed as the first steps in these processes of grammaticalization, which take demonstratives as their starting point and result in the development of such categories as propositional anaphors, comparative constructions, adverbial connectives as well as quotative, exclamative and approximative markers. As a consequence of these extensions of meaning and use, these demonstratives often lose their basic exophoric use and are renewed by local deictics (cf. Italian *eccosi > così*, English *so > like this*; French *ainsi > comme ça*).

References