

# Akan Demonstratives

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## 1. Introduction

Dixon (2003: 61-62) defines a demonstrative simply as “any item, other than 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronouns, which can have pointing or (deictic) reference”.<sup>1</sup> He suggests that all languages may have at least one demonstrative, even though their types, forms and functions may vary across languages.

Diessel (1999) provides a more extensive characterization of what a demonstrative is. He characterizes demonstratives based on three features: syntactic, semantic and pragmatic. He suggests that demonstratives are deictic expressions which serve specific syntactic functions. They do not only include pronouns and adnominals, but also locational adverbs such as English *here* and *there*.

At the semantic level, demonstratives found in most languages are deictically contrastive; there is usually a proximal demonstrative denoting closeness to the deictic center and a distal demonstrative denoting some relative distance from the deictic center. The distinction may be more elaborate in some languages, as reflected in the existence of demonstrative systems which exhibit more than a two-way proximal-distal distinction. Spanish, for instance, has proximal, medial and distal demonstratives (*este*, *ese* and *aquel*, respectively). Levinson (1983) cites languages like Tlingit (North West American) and Samal (The Philippines) which have a four-way distinction and Malagasy (Austronesian) which has a six-way distinction. However, as Diessel correctly remarks, there are a few languages, like German (cf. *dies* ‘this/that’) and French (cf. *ce/cette/ces*), which have distance-neutral demonstratives. Even so, these languages have the capacity to linguistically distinguish distance if need be (cf. French *ce-ci* and *ce-là*).<sup>2</sup>

Pragmatically, demonstratives are used to focus an interlocutor’s attention on objects or locations in the speech situation. They are used to organize the information flow in an ongoing discourse by specifically keeping track of prior discourse participants and activating shared information.

The aim of this paper is two fold. First it seeks to give a description of the types and forms of demonstratives in the Akan (a Niger-Congo (Kwa branch)) language. Second, it looks at the issue of reference resolution with regard to these demonstratives, using Gundel et al.’s (1993) Givenness Hierarchy.

The following section provides a general description of the types and forms of demonstratives as provided by Dixon (2003) and Diessel (1999). Dixon identifies three categories of demonstratives as opposed to Diessel’s four categories. §3 focuses on the description of Akan demonstratives. Following Diessel’s classification, the Akan demonstratives are classified into four major categories. §4 is

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<sup>1</sup> I wish to thank Clement Appah, Nana Ama Agyeman and Thorstein Fretheim for their comments on an earlier draft of this paper. I am also grateful to an anonymous reviewer and the editor of this volume, Doris L. Payne, for their comments, and to Patience Obeng for assistance with the Akan data. The abbreviations used in this paper are as follows: COMP Complementizer, COMPL Completive aspect, CONJ Coordinating connective, DCM Dependent clause marker, DDP Distal demonstrative pronoun, DEF Definite article, DEM Demonstrative form, DET Determiner, DID Demonstrative identifier, FM Focus marker, FUT Future tense, INT Intensifier, LDA Locational demonstrative adverb, MDA Manner demonstrative adverb, NEG Negation morpheme, NP Noun phrase, PDD Proximal demonstrative determiner, PDP proximal demonstrative pronoun, POSS Possessive marker, REL Relative clause marker, SG Person singular.

<sup>2</sup> The syntactic distinctions made in French demonstrative pronouns and determiners are those of gender and number. If distance needs to be specified it is done by means of bound morphemes: *-ci* for proximity and *-là* for relative distance.

concerned with how the references of the demonstratives are resolved. Finally, §5 summarizes the discussion.

## 2. Types and forms of demonstratives

Two major works that deal with the categories and forms of demonstratives are Dixon (2003) and Diessel (1999). The following sub-sections briefly review the categorization of demonstratives by these two authors.<sup>3</sup>

### 2.1. *The Dixonian framework*

Dixon suggests three main types of demonstratives; nominal, adverbial and verbal. A demonstrative is nominal when it occurs in a noun phrase, it

may always appear in an NP with a noun, and in some languages with a pronoun. It is the most common form of demonstratives that is found in the world's languages. In most languages it may also make up a complete NP (the "demonstrative pronoun" function). (Dixon op. cit.: 65).

The above quote suggests that Dixon's category of nominal demonstratives consists of both demonstrative determiners and pronouns. He also significantly highlights that in some languages like Yidinj (Australian) and Jarawara (Amazonian), nominal demonstratives can co-occur with pronouns within a noun phrase. Example (1), taken from page 65 of Dixon's article, illustrates the co-occurrence of nominal demonstratives and pronouns in Yidinj. This is one argument in support of collapsing what has been traditionally known as demonstrative determiners and pronouns into a single category labeled as nominal demonstratives.

- (1)      *ŋayu njundu:banj yiŋu badja-r-ala*  
          1SG 2PL                    this leave-NON.PAST-NOW  
          "I'm now leaving these-you."

An adverbial demonstrative indicates a place and it occurs as a local adverb in a clause. Dixon suggests that no known language lacks two spatially contrasting adverbial demonstratives. An adverbial demonstrative may occur as the only locational specification in its clause or it could co-occur with a locational noun phrase. This is true of languages like English, as illustrated in (2) and (3) below, and Akan (see §3.3.1).

- (2)      I live there.  
 (3)      Yvonne brought me here to the school.

Verbal demonstratives are "verbs with demonstrative meaning, involving deictic reference to an action" (Dixon op. cit.: 72). With regard to this category of demonstratives, Dixon admits it is relatively rare, but he exemplifies it from Boumaa Fijian where the verbal demonstrative *'ene(ii)* (do like this) has three basic functions. First, it can be used deictically to refer to an activity which may be actual or mimicked. Second, it may be used anaphorically, together with a lexical verb, to refer to an earlier described action. Finally it may be used to introduce direct speech.

### 2.2. *The Diesselian framework*

Diessel (1999) distinguishes between the distribution and the categorial status of demonstratives. Distributionally, demonstratives occur in pronominal, adnominal, adverbial and identificational

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<sup>3</sup> Since I refer extensively to these two works in this section and the following one, in many instances I will simply use the authors' names.

positions in a given clause. The demonstrative is pronominal when it occurs independently in argument positions of verbs, as in (4).

(4) I hate this.

When they co-occur with a noun in a noun phrase, as in *this story* in (5), then they are adnominals.

(5) I am fed up with this story.

Adverbial demonstratives function as verb modifiers; this is exemplified in (6).

(6) I live here.

Identificational demonstratives occur in copula and non-verbal clauses, as in the following Ga (Niger Congo, Kwa) example.

(7) Akwele ne.  
Akwele DID  
'This/Here is Akwele.'

The categorial status of a demonstrative is defined by a certain distribution and a specific form. In other words, if different forms of demonstratives are found in the different syntactic positions identified above, then these demonstratives are considered to belong to different categories. Diessel suggests that some languages may have a single series of demonstratives which are used in all four contexts, but most languages have different forms that are used in some and possibly all of these positions. For him, if pronominal, adnominal, adverbial and identificational demonstratives are formally distinguished, then they belong to different grammatical categories. The categories are (i) demonstrative pronoun, (ii) demonstrative determiners, (iii) demonstrative adverbs, and (iv) demonstrative identifiers, respectively.

What follows in §3 is a categorization of Akan demonstratives within the Diesselian framework. I have chosen this framework over Dixon's because Akan demonstratives, as will be seen presently, fit more aptly into the Diesselian categories.

### 3. Akan Demonstratives<sup>4</sup>

Akan demonstratives occur in adnominal, pronominal, adverbial and identificational positions. For each of these positions distinct demonstrative forms are used. As a result, Akan can be said to have demonstrative determiners, demonstrative pronouns, demonstrative adverbs and a demonstrative identifier.

#### 3.1. Demonstrative determiners

Akan has a proximal demonstrative determiner: *yí*, and what may be considered its distal counterpart: *nó*. The latter is the same form which functions as a definite article and a dependent clause marker in relative clauses, temporal clauses and substitutive clauses. Its function as a demonstrative is only determined in context, taking into consideration a variety of other linguistic and contextual information (see §4 and Amfo (2006)). In (8) we find an example of the proximal demonstrative determiner. On the other hand, the noun phrase *èpónó nó* 'the table' in (9) can only be understood as a

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<sup>4</sup> The Akan examples used in this paper are from three major dialects. The ones from Akuapem Twi are taken from the book *Ananse Akuamoa* (Anonymous. 1961). They are marked (Ak), followed by the page number. The example from Fante is marked (Fa). The examples from Asante are from two sources. Those taken from recorded radio programs are marked (RTR). The unmarked ones are invented examples based on native speaker competence.

(distal) demonstrative noun phrase, (contrasting with (10)), if it is accompanied by appropriate gestures or if there is something in the linguistic or extra-linguistic context which makes such an interpretation salient. In other words, the linguistic form *nó* on its own cannot be taken to be a distal demonstrative determiner.

- (8) Ábòffrá yí dé àdùán nó bá-à fíé nó, ná á-tò dèh?  
 child PDD take food DEF come-COMPL home DCM, CONJ PERF-reach what  
 ‘When this child brought the food home, (the question was) what next?’ (Ak.5)
- (9) Fá tó èpónó nó só.  
 take put table DET on  
 Put (it) on that table.’
- (10) Fá tó èpónó yí só.  
 take put table PDD on  
 ‘Put (it) on this table.’

The determiners *yí* and *nó* may occur in two kinds of dependent clauses: relative clauses as in (11) and temporal clauses as in (12) and (13).

- (11) Àdùané á mè-dí-îè yí/nó à-ñ-só mè  
 food REL I-eat-COMPL PDD/DCM COMPL-NEG-be.enough me  
 ‘I wasn’t satiated by this/that food that I ate.’
- (12) Mè-té-ásé yí, mé-yí mè Nyànkópón áyé.  
 I-stay-under PDD, I.FUT-take POSS.1SG God praise  
 ‘While I am alive, I will praise my God.’
- (13) Mè-dúrù hò nó, ná wón á-pòn.  
 I-reach-COMPL there DCM, CONJ they PERF-close  
 ‘When I reached there, they had closed.’

In (11), *yí* may be used in a context where the speaker has an empty plate in front of her and is possibly even pointing to it. There has to be something salient in the physical context to indicate that the speaker just finished a meal. On the other hand *nó* is appropriate even if the interlocutor had no prior knowledge that the speaker had eaten earlier on.

The use of *yí* and *nó* in temporal clauses, as in (12) and (13), expresses some form of temporal deixis. They are used metaphorically to indicate temporal closeness or distance. *Yí* indicates a present or continuing state of affairs; it is restricted to events happening in the present. *Nó*, on the other hand, is used in reference to metaphorically distant events: past (COMPL) as well as future events.<sup>5</sup> For example, in (12), *yí* is appropriate since the life referred to is the present (continuing) life of the speaker.

### 3.2. Demonstrative pronouns

Demonstrative pronouns in Akan have the same stem as the determiners but they occur with prefixes in accordance with the nominal prefix system of the language. Animate nouns usually have *o-/ɔ-* prefixes and inanimate nouns have *e-/ɛ-*. As a result, the proximal demonstrative pronominal will be *òyí* or *èyí* depending on whether its referent is animate or inanimate, respectively. *Èyí* is the form

<sup>5</sup> The fact that the use of *nó* in temporal clauses is consistent with only future or past events was first noted by Christaller (1875). See §4.2 and §4.3 for more on the relevance of the choice of one or the other determiner in temporal clauses.

used in situational reference as well.<sup>6</sup> This is illustrated in (14), where *èyí* refers to a situation where a child, who has been starved for a week because she could not mention the name of her guardian, fell on her way back from the riverside where she was sent to fetch some water.

- (14) Dèh àdè nà é-yè ìnmóbò sèh èyí?  
 What thing FM it-be sad exceed PDP  
 ‘What is sadder than this?’ (Ak.7)

Similar remarks can be made with regard to the form which functions as the distal demonstrative pronoun. The pronoun *èno* is used for inanimate referents and *ðno* refers to an animate entity, as shown in (15) and (16).<sup>7</sup>

- (15) Mè-pè èno.  
 I-like DDP  
 ‘I like that.’
- (16) Mè-pè ðno.  
 I-like DDP (the one further away from speaker)  
 ‘I like him (that person).’

### 3.3. Demonstrative adverbs

There are two kinds of demonstrative adverbs. The more common types are locational deictics. According to Diessel (1999:74), locational deictics are adverbial in that they are “primarily used to indicate the location of the event or situation that is expressed by a co-occurring verb”. He admits, though, that these forms could also occur adnominally, as can be found in Akan (see §3.3.1). Manner demonstratives are the other kind of demonstrative adverbs. They usually involve some comparison and are used as discourse deictics.

#### 3.3.1. Locational demonstrative adverb

There are two locational demonstrative adverbs (LDAs) in Akan; they are *èhá* and *èhó*.<sup>8</sup> They may be translated into English as *here* and *there*, respectively. The LDAs are spatial deictics; *há* is used to refer to an area close to where the speaker is located, which is the deictic center, while *hó* is used in reference to a relatively distant area from the deictic center. The LDAs can occur in at least three syntactic positions. They may occur as adverbial complements in the object position, as in (17). In this position, the LDA may be followed by another adverbial. They may occur as head nominals in a possessive nominal phrase as in (18).<sup>9</sup> Or else they may function as a modifier preceding a head noun, as illustrated in (19).

- (17) Mè bà-à há (ñnórá).  
 I come-COMPL here (yesterday)  
 ‘I came here (yesterday).’

<sup>6</sup> In the Fante dialect, where initial high front vowels are permitted the equivalent of *èyí* is *íyí*. In (colloquial) Asante the form *wèí* has replaced *èyí* as well as *òyí*, and *wèí* is even sometimes used together with a noun, instead of *yí*. As such the form *èyí* in (14), which is in the Akuapem dialect, can be replaced by *wèí* in the Asante dialect.

<sup>7</sup> In the Fante dialect, *ðno* is used for both animate and inanimate referents. It seems to me that this is due to the existence of the phonological feature of rounding vowel harmony in the Fante dialect; this feature is non-existent in the Akuapem and Asante dialects. Only the proximal demonstratives are morphologically marked for plural (with the suffix *-nóm*). Even so, the use of the plural proximal demonstrative determiner is not prominent, especially in the Asante dialect.

<sup>8</sup> The prefix *è* is usually dropped especially in non-initial position.

<sup>9</sup> An utterance like (18) needs to be accompanied by a pointing gesture to some part of the body.

- (18) Mè há/hó á-hònò.  
 POSS.1SG here/there PERF-swell  
 ‘My here/there is swollen.’ i.e. ‘This/that part (of my body) is swollen.’
- (19) Èhá òmòfřá ání ò-só ádéé.  
 here children eye NEG-catch thing  
 ‘Children of this place are not respectful.’  
 (for e.g. Children who live in this town are not respectful.)

The choice between *há* and *hó* in reference to one’s part of the body, as in (18), is determined by who is doing the touching. If the speaker touches any part of her own body, then she will refer to it as *mè há* ‘my here’. On the other hand, if it is someone else who touches any part of the speaker’s body, then she (the speaker) will choose *hó* rather than *há* in reference to that part of her body. However the one doing the touching will refer to that part of the body as *wò há* ‘your here’. This is illustrated by (20), where A poses the question as she touches, say, B’s wrist and B responds without touching any part of his body.<sup>10</sup>

- (20) A: Wò há yé wò yá?  
 POSS.2SG here be you painful  
 ‘Is your here hurting?’ (i.e. Does this part of your body, that I am pointing to, hurts?)
- B: Ááné, mè hó yé mè yá.  
 Yes, POSS.1SG there be me painful  
 ‘Yes, my there is hurting.’

In addition to the above scenario, a speaker will use *hó* in reference to some part of her body which she cannot touch due to the limitations imposed by the length of her hand or simply because it is culturally inappropriate. Also, the distal locational demonstrative *hó* may be used anaphorically to refer to a part of the speaker’s body without any touching on the part of either speaker or interlocutor. A patient, without touching her armpit, can say (21) to her doctor.

- (21) Mè àmótòám yé mè yá. Èhó á-hònò.  
 POSS.1SG armpit be me painful there PERF-swell  
 ‘My armpit is painful. It is swollen.’

LDAs in Akan can be used to reinforce co-occurring demonstrative determiners. In such cases, they all form part of a complex noun phrase together with the head noun and a postposition. The LDA *há* co-occurs with the PDD *yí*, and *hó* is used in the same clause as *no*, as in (22) and (23), respectively.

- (22) Èdáń yí mú há bón.  
 house PDD inside here stinks  
 ‘This room stinks.’
- (23) Èdáń nó mú hó bón.  
 house DEF inside there stinks  
 ‘That room stinks.’

<sup>10</sup> A similar state of affairs occurs in Norwegian where the speaker will say *der gjør det vondt* ‘there it hurts’, when touched by someone else, even on the face.

### 3.3.2. Manner demonstrative adverb

There is only one manner demonstrative adverb (MDA) in Akan. It is *sàá* (or *dém* in Fante). The MDA may be used anaphorically in reference to a previously described situation or action. Example (24) could be said in response to the interlocutor's complaints about the obnoxious conduct of the third person referent (♂) where *sàá* is used to refer to the attitude which has just been described. Also, it is used deictically with accompanying gestures to demonstrate the way in which something is done. It can be glossed as 'in such a manner, like this/that'. For instance, in leading a group of girls to exercise, I can at some point, lie down, raise my legs, while saying (25) at the same time, wanting the interlocutors to copy my movements as faithfully as possible:

(24) *Sàá nà ò-té.*  
like.that FM he-live  
'That is how he is.' (lit. 'He is like that')

(25) *Òbíará ò-yé dém.*  
everyone IMP-do like.this  
'Everyone should do this.' (Fa)

The Asante version of (25) *òbíará òyé sàá* can only be used when the speaker is not the one demonstrating. If the speaker is the one demonstrating, then the demonstrative form must be *séí*. *Séí* can be analyzed as a lexicalized form of the comparative verb *sè* (to be like) plus the proximal demonstrative pronoun *èyí*.

The form *sàá / dém* may be used together with the demonstrative determiners in a single noun phrase. In such cases, it occupies the pre-nominal position, with the co-occurring demonstrative determiner taking its usual post-nominal position. The relationship between the MDA *sàá* and the demonstrative form *sàá* (DEM), as in (27), is not clear, except for the fact that in each case, it has a demonstrative function. The co-occurrence of the proximal demonstrative determiner *yí* with *sàá* indicates some form of emphasis. When *sàá* is used together with *nó*, it delimits the reference of that noun phrase by excluding any non-familiar referent. *Nó* in (26) is underdetermined in terms of the referent being uniquely identifiable, familiar or even activated (cf. Gundel et al.'s (1993) Givenness Hierarchy, see §4). However the presence of *sàá* in (27) requires a referent whose cognitive status is at least familiar. And indeed the referent is likely to be activated.

(26) *Pàpá nó bà-à há.*  
man DEF come-COMPL here  
'The man came here.'

(27) *Sàá pàpá nó bà-à há.*  
DEM man DEF come-COMPL here  
'That man came here.'

### 3.4. Demonstrative Identifier

Unlike the other categories of demonstrative forms discussed in the previous sub-sections, demonstrative identifiers are relatively unknown. Diessel (1999) suggests that demonstrative identifiers are those forms of demonstratives which occur in copula and non-verbal clauses. Their communicative role is to identify a referent in a speech situation by introducing a new discourse topic or drawing the interlocutor's attention to some existing discourse entity. Like other demonstratives, they are deictic, and are used exophorically in many languages. Consequently Rehg (1981) refers to them as pointing demonstratives, whereas Carlson (1994) uses the term deictic identifier pronoun. In

Akan, there is a single demonstrative identifier which is *ní(é)*.<sup>11</sup> It is used in non-verbal clauses. Such clauses usually consist of a noun phrase plus the demonstrative identifier. The noun phrase could contain a single constituent, such as a proper noun or some other head noun, as in (28). On the other hand, it could be a more extended noun phrase with specifiers such as possessive pronouns and modifiers (adjectives), as illustrated in (29), or the head noun could be modified by a relative clause, as shown in (30).

- (28) Kòfí níé.  
Kofi DID  
'Here is Kofi.'
- (29) Wò àtáàdéé kòkósó nó níé.  
POSS dress red DEF DID  
'Here is your red dress.'
- (30) Àdùàné nó á mè kó tó-é nó níé.  
food DEF REL I go buy-COMPL DCM DID  
'Here is the food I went to buy.'

The Akan demonstrative identifier *ní(é)* appears to have evolved from the identificational copula *né* plus the demonstrative pronouns *èyí / òyí*. For example, the clause in (28) could be said to have (31) as its origin. The verb plus the demonstrative pronoun can be said to have fused over the years via some phonological processes resulting in the identificational demonstrative *níé*.

- (31) Kòfí né òyí.  
Kofi be PDP  
'This one is Kofi' (lit. Kofi is this one)

A similar development of demonstrative identifiers from a copula verb and pronouns is suggested by Carlson (1994) for Supyire (Gur, Niger-Congo). He suggests that the identifier pronouns may be the result of a fusion of the general Niger-Congo copula *li/ni* and pronouns.

#### 4. Reference resolution

This section examines how the reference of demonstrative expressions is resolved in Akan. It takes as its point of departure Gundel et al.'s (1993) Givenness Hierarchy, which is summarized in §4.1. Since the Givenness Hierarchy is insufficient on its own as an adequate theory which accounts for reference resolution, reference will be made to Relevance Theory as a general theory of utterance interpretation, of which reference resolution forms a subpart. I will concentrate on the demonstrative determiners since what is happening with this category of demonstratives can be extrapolated for the demonstrative categories which also have the proximal-distal dichotomy, such as the demonstrative pronouns and the locational demonstrative adverbs.

In §4.2 I demonstrate that the cognitive status of the referent of the proximal demonstrative determiner in Akan is activated. With regard to its distal counterpart, in §4.3 I show that even though the actual cognitive status of its referent is familiar, this information is not encoded; it is arrived at as a result of combining its encoded cognitive status of unique identifiability, with other contextual information, including the presence of other demonstratives in the same clause.

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<sup>11</sup> Its Fante equivalent is *nyí*.



#### 4.1. Givenness Hierarchy

The Givenness Hierarchy is a set of purportedly universal implicationally related statuses, correlated with different types of referring expressions. These statuses, specifically known as cognitive statuses, are considered necessary for explaining the relation between referring forms and conditions for their appropriate use and interpretation across languages. Below are the six cognitive statuses aligned with their respective English forms; the most restrictive status is on top of the scale and the least restrictive status is at the bottom.

##### The Givenness Hierarchy (with relevant English forms)

in focus	<i>it</i>	>
activated	<i>this; this N; that</i>	>
familiar	<i>that N</i>	>
uniquely identifiable	<i>the N</i>	>
referential	<i>indefinite-this N</i>	>
type identifiable	<i>a N</i>	

Each cognitive status is a necessary and sufficient condition for the form(s) aligned to it. Because the Givenness Hierarchy is an implicational scale, each status by definition entails all lower statuses. Thus, for example, a form which is familiar can be identified uniquely, which implies that it is referential as well as type identifiable. The cognitive statuses are ordered with ‘in focus’ being the most restrictive and ‘type identifiable’ being the least restrictive.

A form which has the cognitive status ‘type identifiable’ enables the interlocutor to access a representation of the type of object described by the nominal expression. The status type identifiable is necessary for the appropriate use of any nominal expression, and it is sufficient for the use of the indefinite article in English. In (32), the noun phrase *a taxi* is appropriate since the interlocutor is assumed to know the meaning of the word *taxi* and can understand what type of thing the noun phrase refers to.

(32) I couldn’t find a taxi to take me home after the party.

A nominal with the cognitive status ‘referential’ refers to a particular object or objects. It is not sufficient for the interlocutor to be able to access an appropriate type representation; he must be able to either retrieve an existing representation of that nominal or construct a new representation by the time the sentence has been processed. Gundel et al. suggest that this status is necessary for the appropriate use of all definite expressions and it is sufficient for the use of indefinite *this* in colloquial English, as in (33):

(33) Have I told you about this man I met on my way here?

Thus the noun phrase *this man* in (33) is appropriate because the speaker not only intends to refer to a type of entity but to a particular man. Unlike forms with the cognitive status ‘type identifiable’ where reference is made to a type, here there is a shift from reference to a type to reference to a particular token.

An intended referent is ‘uniquely identifiable’ if it can be identified on the basis of the nominal alone. Even though unique identifiability may be based on an already existing representation, familiarity is not required if the nominal contains enough descriptive content. Thus (34) is felicitous even if the interlocutor has no previous knowledge about the man the speaker is referring to.

(34) The new man in my life gave me this beautiful sweater for Christmas.

A nominal which has the cognitive status ‘familiar’ refers to an object or objects which the interlocutor already has a representation of. If the object has been recently mentioned or perceived,

then it is in short-term memory. Otherwise, the interlocutor has a representation of the referent in his or her long-term memory. The cognitive status familiar is necessary for all personal pronouns and demonstratives and it is sufficient for the felicitous use of the demonstrative determiner *that*. The noun phrase *that man* in (35) can only be used felicitously if the interlocutor already has a representation of the man being referred to, either in short-term or long-term memory.

(35) That man is really frustrating me.

The referent of a nominal which is ‘activated’ is represented in current short-term memory. Activated representations may arise from the immediate linguistic or extralinguistic context. Activation is necessary for the appropriate use of all pronominal forms and it is sufficient for the use of the demonstrative pronouns *this* and *that*, all stressed personal pronouns, and the demonstrative determiner *this*. The use of *this letter* in (36) is appropriate either because the letter has been mentioned in the immediately preceding discourse or because it is visibly present in the communicative situation so that *this* serves a deictic function.

(36) This letter has really infuriated me.

The referent of a noun phrase which is ‘in focus’ is at the current centre of attention. Entities which are in focus are likely to be continued as topics of subsequent utterances. The cognitive status ‘in focus’ is necessary and sufficient for the use of unstressed pronouns. The use of *it* in (37) is appropriate since its referent *the kitchen* is the current centre of attention.

(37) The kitchen is very well furnished. It is the most adorable room in this house.

Even though the cognitive statuses are purportedly universal, not every language codes all six statuses and the natural language forms aligned with the various statuses may differ from language to language. Below is a set of the Givenness Hierarchy alignments for Akan proposed by Fretheim and Amfo (2005, forthcoming).

#### The Givenness Hierarchy (alignments for Akan)<sup>12</sup>

in focus	ɔ̀ ‘s/he’; è- ‘it’; nò ‘him/her’	>
activated	ɔ̀nó ‘S/HE, HIM/HER’; ènó IT/THAT; N yí ‘this N’; èyí ‘this’	>
familiar	sàá N nó ‘that N’	>
uniquely identifiable	N nó ‘the N’	>
referential	N bí ‘a certain N’	>
type identifiable	N	>

However, from the interlocutor’s perspective, identification of a unique referent for a given token of a referring expression involves more than knowledge of the minimum cognitive status required for the use of that expression. Knowledge of the encoded cognitive status of that referent is combined with general utterance interpretation principles, such as those provided within the relevance-theoretic framework (cf. Sperber and Wilson 1995, Blakemore 1987, Carston 2002, Wilson 1992, Matsui 2000 inter alia), in resolving the reference of a referring expression. Indeed the actual cognitive statuses of the referents of definite descriptions including demonstratives are often higher than their encoded statuses. For instance, even though ‘the N’ encodes a cognitive status of unique identifiability, the actual cognitive status of a noun phrase with the form ‘the N’ may be familiar or even activated. How can the actual referent of a demonstrative noun phrase or any other referring expression be identified then? The encoded cognitive status provides an input to the inferential process of reference resolution.

<sup>12</sup> Upper case used in some of the glosses indicates that their equivalent Akan forms are emphatic.

It delimits the context within which the referent is supposed to be retrieved. In other words, it provides procedural information as to where within the context the referent can be found. Procedural information is that kind of information which, Relevance Theorists contend, constrains the context in a way that aids the interlocutor in minimizing the processing effort used in the interpretation process for maximum contextual effects, without necessarily contributing to the conceptual content of an utterance.<sup>13</sup> Contextual effects are those assumptions which the interlocutor derives as a result of combining a newly introduced assumption with some of those assumptions which are already available to him. In the interpretation process, the interlocutor proceeds with the presumption that the given utterance is relevant enough to be worth his processing effort. And since the speaker wants to be understood she will make her utterance as easy as possible for the interlocutor to understand, within the limits of her abilities and preferences.<sup>14</sup>

Evidence from five languages analyzed by Gundel et al. (op. cit.) indicated that the cognitive statuses required for the appropriate use of demonstratives are usually activated or familiar; activated for proximal and medial demonstratives, and familiar for distal and medial demonstratives depending on the language in question.<sup>15</sup> It is only Chinese which deviates from this pattern, in that the distal demonstrative determiner *nèi* only requires its referent to be uniquely identifiable.

#### 4.2. Proximal Demonstrative Determiner

The proximal demonstrative determiner (PDD) *yí*, used together with some descriptive content in the form of a noun (plus modifiers), may be used deictically to refer to an object closer to the speaker. The speaker in (38) uses the noun phrase *kràtàá yí* ‘this letter’ in reference to a letter she has in her hands.

- (38) *Kràtàá yí fi Bègòró.*  
 letter PDD from Begoro  
 ‘This letter is from Begoro.’ (RTR)

The demonstrative noun phrase in (38), *kràtàá yí*, had not been mentioned in the preceding discourse. The interlocutor identifies it in the physical environment simultaneously as it is mentioned. Identifying the noun phrase *kràtàá yí* with the object which is visible in the physical environment makes the utterance optimally relevant. In other words, enough contextual effects are achieved for minimum processing effort. It thus becomes unnecessary to look any further within the linguistic context for any more potential referents. This follows from the relevance-theoretic comprehension strategy (Wilson and Sperber 2004: 612) which suggests that the interlocutor follows a path of least effort in computing contextual effects. Aspects of the interpretation process such as disambiguation and reference assignment are done as and when needed. The interlocutor stops as soon as his expectations of relevance are met.

A noun phrase containing a PDD may be used exophorically, as in (38) above, or anaphorically in reference to an entity which has been recently mentioned in the discourse; or else it may be used cataphorically, whereby a referent is mentioned immediately after the demonstrative noun phrase. In (39) what is referred to as *mé háw yí* (lit. ‘this my problem’) is a long narration that follows the complementizer *sé*, describing the extent of the speaker’s problem.

- (39) *ò-sé, mé háw yí né sé, . . .*  
 He-say, POSS problem PDD be COMP, . . .  
 ‘He says, my problem is that . . .’ (RTR)

<sup>13</sup> For more on the concept of procedural information see Wilson and Sperber (1993), Blakemore (1987, 1992, 2002), Bezuidenhout (2004); for its application see, for example, Amfo (2005a, 2005b), Andersen and Fretheim (2000).

<sup>14</sup> This is the essence of the two-part revised presumption of optimal relevance suggested by Sperber and Wilson (1995:270) and repeated in Wilson and Sperber (2004: 612).

<sup>15</sup> The five languages analyzed are Chinese, English, Japanese, Russian and Spanish.

The use of a PDD signals to the interlocutor that the identity of the referent of that noun phrase is immediately accessible, either through the immediately preceding or the following text or in the physical environment. The use of a proximal demonstrative determiner provides an instruction to the interlocutor to look in the immediate (linguistic or extra-linguistic) context for its referent.

When the PDD is used in relative clauses, as exemplified by the use of the second token of *yí* in (41), the information provided in the relative clause is most likely to have been mentioned in the immediately preceding discourse or else it can be retrieved from the extra-linguistic context. It could also be an elaboration of some previously given information. For instance, the information given in the relative clause in (41) has not been mentioned anywhere in the immediately preceding discourse. There has been no earlier explicit mention of the fact that the old lady had algae on her body; even so, that expression is used figuratively to show how scary-looking she was, an assertion which is part of the proposition expressed in (40).<sup>16</sup>

(40) ð-kò-tó-ò                      àbèrèwá pósópósó bí á nè hó yè hú yíyé.  
she-go-arrive-COMPL old.lady decrepit some REL POSS.3SG skin be fearful INT  
'She got to an extremely decrepit lady who was very scary indeed.' (Ak.3)

(41) Àbòfřá yí né àberèwá á nè hó ñkòñkòñéné yí tèná-è.  
child PDD CONJ old.lady REL POSS skin algae PDD stay-COMPL  
'This child stayed with this algae infested old lady.' (Ak.4)

The information given in the relative clause is modified by *yí* not because this information has been explicitly mentioned in the immediate linguistic environment or can be perceived in the extra linguistic context, but because it is an elaboration of the information provided in the immediately preceding text. Indeed, as has been argued in Fretheim and Amfo (2005, forthcoming), the choice of a demonstrative, like the PDD in (41), rather than the underdetermined definiteness marker *nó* is what facilitates the resolution of the intended referent.<sup>17</sup> Even though the information provided in the *yí*-modified relative clause is not previously 'known', the very presence of *yí* forces an anchor within the immediate linguistic context. In this case, the interlocutor is able to link the algae infested old lady to the scary old lady as a singular referent. On the other hand if the speaker had chosen to use *nó*, there is no guarantee that the interlocutor would be able to successfully pick out the intended referent. The two different descriptions, in (40) and (41) could well be attributed to two different people. There is a deictic element in *yí* that is lacking in *nó*, which means that a phrase modified by the demonstrative determiner *yí* can more easily be related to a coreferential antecedent in the preceding discourse, i.e. an activated discourse referent.

As mentioned earlier in §3.1, the use of *yí* and *nó* in temporal clauses expresses some form of temporal deixis. *Yí* is used in reference to a present or continuing state of affairs, whereas *nó* refers to events further away from the present, into the past or the future. For example, *yí* cannot modify the initial temporal clause in (13), repeated here, as a substitution for *nó*, since it refers to a distant, specifically past, state of affairs.<sup>18</sup>

(13) Mè-dúrù-ù hó nó, ná wón á-pòn.  
I-reach-COMPL there DCM, CONJ they PERF-close  
'When I reached there, they had closed.'

The PDD encodes the cognitive status 'activated'. When *yí* combines with a nominal, its referent is perceived in the immediate extra linguistic context, closer to the speaker, or in the immediate linguistic context. The same can be said of the proximal demonstrative pronoun. In a 'non-deictic'

<sup>16</sup> Notice that (40) – (41) is to be read as a sequence of consecutive utterances.

<sup>17</sup> Definiteness is used here to refer to any form whose referent has a minimum cognitive status of uniquely identifiable.

<sup>18</sup> Also the presence of the LDA *hó* does not permit a co-occurring proximal demonstrative determiner.

situation, when the pronominal demonstrative pronoun *èyí* is used, its referent is textual, either referring to a situation which has just been described or is just about to be described.

#### 4.3. Distal Demonstrative Determiner

The form *no* in Akan has a number of grammatical functions, as already mentioned in §3.1. Leaving aside the low tone *nò*, which is used in reference to the third person singular animate object, high tone *nó* is used as a definite article as well as a dependent clause marker (DCM). As a dependent clause marker it may (a) mark a clause as temporal, (b) occur in a relative clause, or (c) mark the clause it follows as a ‘substitutive’ construction: Q, instead of P.

*Nó* as it occurs in the above mentioned grammatical contexts has been analyzed as having one and the same semantic value (cf. Amfo (2006), Amfo and Fretheim (2005), Fretheim and Amfo (2005, forthcoming)). It encodes the cognitive status ‘uniquely identifiable’, even though frequently its referent is to an entity which is familiar to the interlocutor. Evidence for an encoded lower cognitive status than familiar is found in the attributive use (cf. Donnellan 1966) of *nó*-NPs. The referent of *àkàsàmáfóó nó* ‘the speaker’ in (42) need not be familiar to either speaker or interlocutor. It may be used in reference to whoever fits that description.

- (42) *àkàsàmáfóó nó bɛ̀-ɓá sɛ̀sɛ̀sí árá, éntí yé-ń-twɛ̀ń kàkɛ̀rá.*  
 speaker DEF FUT-come now just, so we-IMP-wait little  
 ‘The speaker will arrive soon, so let’s wait a little while.’

The ‘demonstrative’ effect of *nó* can only be distinguished in context; it is not part of its encoded semantic value. This is very often achieved by collocating *nó* with the pre-nominal demonstrative form *sàá* or sometimes with the distal locational demonstrative adverb, *hɔ́*. The presence of *sàá* in (43) aids the interlocutor in assuming a minimum cognitive status of familiar rather than uniquely identifiable for the referent of the *nó*-NP.

- (43) *Mè-pɛ̀ sàá àtààdɛ̀é nó.*  
 I-like DEM dress DEF  
 ‘I like that dress.’

- (44) *Mè-pɛ̀ àtààdɛ̀é nó.*  
 I-like dress DEF  
 ‘I like the dress.’

Both dresses referred to in (43) and (44) are likely to be familiar, but the one referred to in (44) could be just uniquely identifiable, such that the interlocutor has no prior knowledge of the dress being referred to. Example (43) could be an answer to a question like the following; ‘I have two things from which you can only chose one, a dress and a book, which one do you want?’ The addition of *sàá* in (43) forces the interlocutor to go beyond the encoded cognitive status of unique identifiability and assume a cognitive status of at least familiar for that noun phrase. That is, a mental representation of the entity described as a dress is derived from the extra-linguistic context and its mention is accompanied by a pointing gesture, or it is in the interlocutor’s short-term memory by virtue of it having been recently mentioned. Actual contextual information combined with the presumption of optimal relevance may even force the interlocutor to associate that noun phrase with some representation in his current short-term memory. The presence of the pre-nominal demonstrative provides procedural information that the actual cognitive status of its referent is higher than uniquely identifiable: it may be familiar or even activated.

The use of the distal LDA, *hɔ́*, together with *nó* in a single clause is another way of signaling to the interlocutor that the minimum cognitive status of the *nó*-NP’s referent is familiar. The omission of the demonstrative *hɔ́* in (23), repeated below, will simply provide the interlocutor with the information that a uniquely identifiable, possibly familiar room stinks. The inclusion of *hɔ́* indicates to the

interlocutor that the room being referred to is definitely familiar or probably even activated. It could be present in the physical context though relatively further away from the deictic center.

- (23) Èdáń nó mú hó bńń.  
 house DEF inside there stinks  
 'That room stinks.'

## 5. Summary

This paper has been concerned with describing demonstrative forms in Akan and also showing how the references of these forms are resolved. Following Diessel's (1999) categorization, Akan demonstratives are classified into four major categories. They are demonstrative determiners, demonstrative pronouns, demonstrative adverbs and demonstrative identifiers.

The demonstrative determiners and pronouns may be said to have proximal and distal pairs, even though what can be termed as the distal demonstrative determiner has an encoded cognitive status of uniquely identifiable. However the co-occurrence of other linguistic forms or reliance on extra linguistic information can help in communicating a demonstrative meaning. Determiners in Akan not only modify nouns or nominals but also whole clauses, including relative and temporal clauses.

The demonstrative adverbs consist of two subcategories. These are locational demonstrative adverbs and the manner demonstrative adverb. The locational adverbial demonstratives are made up of a distal-proximal pair and there is a single manner demonstrative adverb.

The less common identificational demonstrative category exists in Akan. This demonstrative is used exophorically in non-verbal clauses to draw the interlocutor's attention to an object, person or situation in the physical setting.

With regard to reference resolution, the proximal demonstratives in Akan encode the cognitive status 'activated'. Their use signals to the interlocutor the information that its referent is in the immediate linguistic or extra linguistic context. The interlocutor will then have to rely on contextual information, (combined with the principle of optimal relevance and following the relevance-theoretic comprehension strategy), to determine whether its referent is backwards in the text, in the case of anaphora, or forwards, in the case of cataphora, or whether it can be retrieved from the extra-linguistic context, as in its deictic use. On the other hand the identification of the referent of the distal demonstrative determiner *nó* depends more on the co-presence of other demonstratives in the same clause, and also on the physical environment. Whereas the use of *sáá* and *há* together with *yí* does not affect its demonstrative interpretation, it is the very presence of *sáá* and *há* co-occurring with *nó* which helps in constraining its reference by excluding any referent with a cognitive status lower than familiar.

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edited by Doris L. Payne and Jaime Peña

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Abstract: Nana Aba Appiah Amfo, Akan Demonstratives. It has been suggested that all languages may have at least one demonstrative, even though their types, forms and functions may vary. The objective of this paper is two fold. First, it seeks to give a description of the types and forms of demonstratives in Akan, a Niger-Congo (Kwa branch) language spoken in Ghana. Demonstrative pronouns and determiners fall into this category. In fact, the four words we use as demonstrative pronouns are exactly the same words we use as demonstrative determiners: this. that. These words, whether used as pronouns or determiners, tell us where something is in relation to us. We will see what we mean by this as we continue. But let's have a look first at how we can tell if one of these words is a demonstrative pronoun or a demonstrative determiner.