

Pragmatic Binding: Demonstratives as Anaphors in Dutch

Author(s): Bernard Comrie

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Pragmatic binding: Demonstratives as anaphors in Dutch  
Bernard Comrie  
University of Southern California

Abstract

In Dutch, demonstrative pronouns can be used as anaphors, contrasting with personal pronouns. It is argued that this use of the demonstrative pronoun picks out a nontopical antecedent, whereas the personal pronoun is used to pick out a topical antecedent.

1. Introduction

This article is part of an ongoing investigation of the typology of reference-tracking devices. One of the overarching hypotheses that has emerged from this work is that there is a strong correlation between the use of marked reference-tracking devices and the domain that includes the reference in question and its antecedent. The overarching hypothesis can be formulated as in (1):

- (1) In the most local domain (e.g. the arguments of a single predicate), it is expected that noun phrases will be noncoreferential, and coreferentiality is most likely to be marked here. In the most global domains (e.g. across clause and sentence boundaries), it is expected that referential continuity will be maintained, and noncoreferentiality or unexpected coreferentiality is more likely to be marked. Precise cutoff points will vary from language to language.

Some simple examples illustrating this generalization follow.

Many languages have marked reflexive pronouns (REFL) to indicate coreference. These occur in the most local domain, and the degree to which they extend beyond the most local domain varies from language to language. In English, for example, reflexive pronouns are found (roughly) for arguments within the clause, but not for adjuncts or across clause boundaries, even non-finite clause boundaries, as in (2)–(4):

- (2) John saw himself (REFL) in the mirror.
- (3) John saw a snake behind him.
- (4) John asked Mary to make him some tea.

In Russian, obligatory reflexivization includes not only arguments within the clause, but also adjuncts, and can optionally extend across infinitival clause boundaries, as in (5)–(7), the Russian translations of (2)–(3):

- (5) Vanja uvidel sebja (REFL) v zerkale.
- (6) Vanja uvidel za soboj (REFL) zmeju.
- (7) Vanja poprosil Mašu vskipjatit' sebe (REFL)/emu čaj.

The second part of hypothesis (1) can be illustrated by the complementary distribution that sometimes obtains in French between the subjunctive and the infinitive across a clause boundary. Coreference across the clause boundary, the more expected situation, involves the infinitive with no overt subject of its own, as in (8); noncoreference requires a finite verb form with an expressed subject, as in (9):

- (8) Je veux partir.  
'I want to leave.'
- (9) Je veux que tu partes.  
'I want you to leave (lit. that you leave).'

In Russian, where there is coreference between the subject of certain adverbial clauses and the subject of the main clause, a nonfinite verb form (converb, gerund) may optionally be used in the adverbial clause, and this verb form has no overt subject of its own; compare (10) and (11):

- (10) *Kogda on kupil bilet, Vanja sel v avtobus.*  
'When he had bought a ticket, Vanya entered the bus.'
- (11) *Kupiv bilet, Vanja sel v avtobus.*  
'Having bought a ticket, Vanya entered the bus.'

Where there is no coreference, as in (12), it is necessary to specify the referent of the subject of the adverbial clause:

- (12) *Kogda papa kupil bilet, Vanja sel v avtobus.*  
'When Father had bought a ticket, Vanya entered the bus.'

## 2. Demonstrative pronouns as anaphors

Against the background of the general hypothesis presented in section 1, more specifically its second part relating to global domains, I wish to examine a phenomenon found in a number of European languages, whereby, under certain circumstances, demonstrative pronouns are used instead of the usual personal pronouns. To look forward a little, I will claim that the use of the more marked demonstrative pronoun indicates a less expected antecedent. Examples are presented below from Russian ((13), from Kibrik 1990: 230), German ((14)–(15)), Afrikaans ((16)–(17), from Donaldson 1993: 100, 139, 145), and Dutch ((18)–(22)):

- (13) *Graf dal baronu pošč eninu, a tot vyzval ego na duèl'.*  
'The Count<sub>i</sub> gave the Baron<sub>j</sub> a slap on the face, and HE<sub>j</sub> challenged him<sub>i</sub> to a duel.'

In Russian example (13), the use of the demonstrative—Russian has only the distal demonstrative *tot* 'that' in this use—rather than the personal pronoun *on* 'he' indicates that the antecedent is not the Count but the Baron. This example also introduces some notational conventions that I will use below in the English translations: identical subscript letters indicate coreference; an English pronoun in small capitals indicates a demonstrative in the original.

In such examples, German uses the neutral demonstrative (stressed) *der*, rather than the personal pronoun series *er* 'he', etc.; a rich set of German data is, incidentally, presented in Zifonun et al. (in press). Example (15) below is from a short story (*Spiel auf Leben und Tod*) by the contemporary writer Gerd Prokop:

- (14) *Sie begrüßte ihre Freunde und deren Kinder.*  
'She greeted her friends<sub>j</sub> and THEIR<sub>j</sub> children.'

- (15) Smiley zeigte auf einen „Tattoo-Duell-Saloon“, wo der Gewinner des Duells den Unterlegenen nach seinem Geschmack und auf dessen Kosten verzieren oder wahrscheinlicher verunzieren lassen konnte.  
 ‘Smiley indicated a “tattoo duel saloon”, where the winner<sub>i</sub> of the duel could have the loser<sub>j</sub> decorated, or more likely disfigured, according to his<sub>i</sub> taste and at HIS<sub>j</sub> expense.’

Note that the English translation of the crucial part of (15) is virtually meaningless, since English lacks the contrast between this use of personal and demonstrative pronouns; in English one would have to say something like ‘according to the winner’s taste and at the loser’s expense’. In German, however, the distinction between personal and demonstrative pronoun is strong enough to force the minimal contrast in (15).

In Afrikaans the contrast is between the demonstrative *dié* ‘this, that’ and the personal pronoun series *hy* ‘he’, etc.:

- (16) Koos en Jan en dié se pa  
 ‘Koos and Jan<sub>i</sub> and HIS<sub>j</sub> father’  
 (17) Gerrit is met Koos en dié se pa na die vendusie.  
 ‘Gerrit has gone with Koos<sub>j</sub> and HIS<sub>j</sub> father to the auction.’  
 (18) Hierdie tentdorp huisves plaaswerkers wat oor die brug na veiligheid geneem is voordat die oorspoel is.  
 ‘This tent town houses farm-workers who were taken to safety over the bridge<sub>j</sub> before IT<sub>j</sub> was flooded.’

Since Dutch will form the database for the body of this article, I will give the Dutch forms in somewhat more detail. On the one hand, we have ordinary personal pronouns, such as *hij* ‘he’, *hem* ‘him’, *zijn* ‘his’. On the other hand, one can use either the proximal demonstrative *deze* ‘this’, or the distal demonstrative *die* ‘that’. In this use of the demonstratives, there seems to be no semantic distinction between the two series of demonstratives, unlike, for instance, in reference-tracking use of demonstrative adjectives in Dutch (Kirsner and van Heuven 1988). Rather, the difference is one of register, distal *die* being preferred in the spoken language, proximal *deze* in the written language. This distribution is noted in the earlier linguistic literature (e.g. Geerts et al. 1984: 219), and is consistent with my own data. There is one exception to this distribution: proximal *deze* lacks an inflectional genitive of its own, and in the written language the genitive of *die*, namely *diens*, is used; such inflectional genitives are not usual in contemporary spoken Dutch, so that in this particular reference-tracking usage *diens* is just as much a marker of written style as is *deze*. Since the bulk of my Dutch database consists of sentences involving singular male human beings, for reasons to be given below, the above summary gives only forms appropriate for masculine singular reference. Simple, made-up examples illustrating the Dutch forms follow:

- (19) Wim zag Piet en zijn vriend.  
 ‘Wim<sub>i</sub> saw Piet<sub>j</sub> and his<sub>i,j</sub> friend.’  
 (20) Wim zag Piet en diens vriend.  
 ‘Wim<sub>i</sub> saw Piet<sub>j</sub> and HIS<sub>j</sub> friend.’  
 (21) Wim en Piet en zijn vriend  
 ‘Wim<sub>i</sub> and Piet<sub>j</sub> and his<sub>i,j</sub> friend’

- (22) Wim en Piet en diens vriend  
 'Wim<sub>i</sub> and Piet<sub>j</sub> and HIS<sub>j</sub> friend'

Before turning to the analysis of the personal/demonstrative pronoun opposition, one caveat is in order. In a number of European languages, distal and proximal demonstrative pronouns are used as reference-tracking discriminators in a way paralleling English *the former* versus *the latter*, as in the following Italian example (Lepschy and Lepschy 1988: 127):

- (23) Considerate Manzoni e Leopardi: questi fu il maggior poeta, quegli il maggior prosatore dell'Ottocento.  
 'Consider Manzoni and Leopardi: the latter (lit. this) was the greatest poet, the former (lit. that) the greatest prose writer of the nineteenth century.'

This distinction is NOT the distinction that is at issue in this paper. In the phenomenon discussed in this paper, none of the relevant languages uses the difference between proximal and distal demonstratives to express a difference in antecedent. Russian uses only the distal demonstrative. German uses only the neutral demonstrative. Afrikaans uses its only noncompound demonstrative series. Dutch uses both proximal and distal demonstrative series, but without a semantic distinction between them.

On the basis of the Russian, German, Afrikaans, and Dutch examples presented so far, but more especially on the basis of the more detailed Dutch data to be presented in section 3, I suggest the hypothesis in (24) to account for the distinction between personal pronouns and demonstrative pronouns in reference-tracking usage in these languages:

- (24) The demonstrative is used where there are two potential antecedents for a pronoun in the relevant position. Use of the demonstrative excludes one of the possible antecedents. This use of the demonstrative is an anaphor, in the narrow sense, since it requires an antecedent in the linguistic context; indeed, more accurately, it requires two "antecedents", one of which is excluded, the other actualized. The demonstrative is the marked choice. Since it establishes coreference within a global domain, it must establish less expected coreference.

(A slight amendment to hypothesis (24), at least with respect to Dutch, will, incidentally, be suggested in section 4.)

The hypothesis in (24) is fine as far as it goes, but it leaves one crucial question answered: How does one determine which of two potential antecedents is less expected (and thus expressible with the demonstrative)? In practice, a somewhat more easily testable version of the same question is: How does one identify the "excluded antecedent"? There are at least three plausible hypotheses:

- a) The excluded antecedent is subject. (grammatical relation)
- b) The excluded antecedent is the leftmost noun phrase, or at least is not the rightmost noun phrase. (linear order)
- c) The excluded antecedent is the highest in topicality. (pragmatic role)

It should be noted at the outset that there is no requirement that the choice among (a)–(c) should be the same for all languages. In Russian, for instance, to the extent that the construction has been discussed in this much detail, hypothesis (a) has been preferred, as in Kibrik (1990), and there is evidence in favor of this assumption. If one topicalizes a nonsubject noun phrase by preposing it, as in (25), then the subject remains the best candidate for the excluded noun phrase, and the demonstrative pronoun continues to refer back to the nonsubject:

- (25) Vanju uvidel Petja, no tot ubežal.  
'Petya saw Vanya<sub>j</sub>, but HE<sub>j</sub> ran away.'

In the literature on German, hypothesis (b) has generally been maintained, as in Fillmore (1975) and Zifonun et al. (in press). In section 3, however, I will suggest that hypothesis (c) is correct for Dutch, i.e. that in Dutch the relevant anaphoric distinction is pragmatically conditioned.

Incidentally, perhaps the most explicit claim concerning the distinction in Dutch is that made by Kozinsky and Polinsky (1993: 213), primarily on the basis of elicited material:

Dutch has argument and possessive pronouns (originally demonstratives) that indicate that their antecedent is not subject and/or topic, in other words, they instruct the hearer to disregard the most obvious antecedent. ... We do not have enough data to claim that *deze* type pronouns are controlled exclusively by DO [direct object—BC]. However, DO is preferred over a non-term.

The authors are diffident in choosing between a grammatical relation and a pragmatic role solution, although they suggest that direct object is the best controller for the demonstrative anaphor. While the detailed data to be presented in section 3 do not provide direct confirmation of this, it is perhaps not difficult to see how such a pattern could arise in elicited data, where it is hard to control for topicality—subjects tend to be interpreted as topics, in the absence of clear indications to the contrary—and where, if the subject is interpreted as topic and thus as “excluded antecedent”, the direct object is probably the next best choice as antecedent for the demonstrative, whether on a hierarchy of grammatical relations or one of degrees of topicality.

### 3. Demonstratives as anaphors in Dutch

In this section, the body of the analytical part of the article, I will examine in greater detail the use of demonstrative pronouns as anaphors in Dutch, with emphasis on written Dutch. The choice of (written) Dutch is not entirely random. First, this use of the demonstrative pronouns seems to be particularly frequent in Dutch. While I have not done a detailed statistical study to justify this, my impression from reading Dutch, German, and Russian is that reading even a few pages of Dutch will generate at least one example, while reading a German novel of a couple of hundred pages may be needed to generate a similar-sized corpus of examples, with Russian generating even fewer examples than German per similar amount of text. Second, the use of pronominal *deze* in written Dutch is almost exclusive to this use, whereas the corresponding German, and even spoken Dutch, forms have the disadvantage that they have a tendency, in colloquial language, to be substituted for personal pronouns in a much wider range of circumstances. (This extension of

usage does not apply to Russian *tot*, but as noted Russian has the disadvantage of generating the smallest corpus of examples.) Thus, of the three languages Dutch, especially in its written form, is the one that most readily generates a sizable corpus of reliable examples.

There turns out to be a third reason, specific to the main corpus of which I have made use, namely the monograph on Erasmus by the famous Dutch historian Jan Huizinga (Huizinga 1936); examples taken from this source are marked "H" after the Dutch text. Much of Huizinga's account is taken up with interactions between Erasmus and other men, such as a publisher, a polemic adversary, and—somewhat to the chagrin of the reader expecting to find unconditional endorsement of the Netherlands' culture hero—someone from whom Erasmus is trying to beg free lodging or a free meal. This work is thus replete with examples of just the kind we are looking for.

Many examples are, of course, ambivalent in deciding among the three hypotheses (a)–(c) presented in section (2), and indeed this is to be expected, given that topics tend to be subjects and to occur towards the beginning of the clause. Thus, in (26) one could argue that the demonstrative *diens* takes as its actual antecedent *Augustijn Caminade*, rather than *hij* (which in turn refers back to Erasmus), because it is a nonsubject contrasting with the subject *hij*, or because the actual antecedent occurs to the right of the excluded antecedent *hij*, or because the actual antecedent is not topic:

- (26) Herhaaldelijk drijft de vrees voor de pest hem voort: in 1500 uit Parijs naar Orléans, waar hij eerst inwoont bij Augustijn Caminade, doch verhuist, zodra een van diens kostjongens ziek wordt. (H)  
 'Repeatedly fear of the plague drives him<sub>i</sub> [=Erasmus] away: in 1500 from Paris to Orleans, where he<sub>i</sub> resides first with Augustijn Caminade<sub>j</sub>, but moves as soon as one of HIS<sub>j</sub> boarders falls sick.'

One of the advantages of a rich corpus is that it provides sufficient examples where these three factors can be disentangled. But before going on to such examples, one other point should be established. Although Dutch allows the use of demonstrative pronouns to establish coreference with a less preferred antecedent, it does not require their use, i.e. there are examples where a personal pronoun can be used to refer back to a less preferred antecedent, as in (27):

- (27) Als Erasmus naar Haarlem gaat, om Willem Harmens op te zoeken, is het, om ook hem tot graecus te maken ... (H)  
 'When Erasmus<sub>i</sub> goes to Haarlem to seek out Willem Harmens<sub>j</sub>, it is in order to make him<sub>j</sub>; too a Greek scholar.'

It should, however, be noted that at least in Huizinga's writing, it is more usual to make use of the demonstrative pronoun where it is possible. This may well be true for Dutch, at least written Dutch, in general, thus accounting for the high rate of usage of the construction. And native-speaker reactions to made-up or out-of-context examples suggest that there is a noticeable tendency for personal pronouns to be taken as referring back to the preferred antecedent.

There are, however, examples where the excluded antecedent is not a subject. Consider, for instance, (28):

- (28) Het zou onjuist zijn, Erasmus daarom tot voorloper van de moderne geest in het algemeen te willen stempelen. Aan tal van diens ontplooiingen is hij te enen male vreemd geweest. (H)  
 'It would be unjust to want for this reason to stamp Erasmus; as the precursor of the modern spirit; in general. To several of ITS; developments he; was completely foreign.'

The excluded antecedent for the demonstrative pronoun is the direct object of the preceding sentence, *Erasmus*. The actual antecedent of the demonstrative is *de moderne geest* 'the modern spirit', which is part of a genitive attribute. Thus it is clearly not necessarily the case that the excluded antecedent be a subject, although example (28) leaves open whether the determining factor is the linear order of noun phrases. We might also note that the demonstrative does not select the direct object *Erasmus* as its preferred actual antecedent, although here such an interpretation would make no sense.

Example (29) can take us further in disentangling the various factors that might distinguish personal from demonstrative pronouns; this example comes from a passage clearly dealing with Erasmus as topic:

- (29) Eppendorffs vijandschap prikkelde Erasmus zo, dat hij overal diens machinaties en spionnen zag... (H)  
 'Eppendorff's; hostility irritated Erasmus; so much that he; saw HIS; machinations and spies everywhere...'

In (29), the excluded antecedent is *Erasmus*, which is neither subject (in fact, it is direct object), nor leftmost (or nonrightmost) noun phrase of the preceding clause, in fact it is its rightmost noun phrase. Thus, in (29) the fact that *Erasmus* is topic is the only reason for its treatment as the excluded antecedent, leaving *Eppendorff* as the actual antecedent of the demonstrative pronoun. Note, incidentally, that the topic-comment structure of (29) is clear enough to pre-empt any tendency there might be to take a direct object as the actual antecedent of the demonstrative pronoun.

The following examples provide further evidence of actual antecedents other than the direct object for the demonstrative pronoun. In (30) and (31), the actual antecedent is a possessive genitive:

- (30) Beatus Rhenanus wist later, uit Erasmus' mond ongetwijfeld, te vertellen, hoe deze, terstond na aankomst te Venetië naar de drukkerij gegaan, daar lang had moeten wachten.  
 'Beatus Rhenanus was later able, undoubtedly from Erasmus's; mouth, to say how HE; having gone to the press immediately upon arrival in Venice, had had to wait there for a long time.'
- (31) Juist in die dagen schrijft Erasmus aan een van Luthers medestanders, Johannes Lang, zeer gunstig over diens werk.  
 'Precisely around that time Erasmus writes very positively to one of Luther's; supporters, Johannes Lang, about HIS; work.'

(Out of linguistic and cultural context, the demonstrative pronoun in (31) could also be taken to refer to Johannes Lang, the corresponding noun phrase being part of an argument prepositional phrase.) Example (32) shows a noun phrase (*Froben*)

forming part of an adjunct prepositional phrase as the actual antecedent; the excluded antecedent is a possessive genitive:

- (32) Doch het naaste doel van zijn reis was, om in Bazel bij Froben zelf de druk te gaan bezorgen van de talrijke werken, oude en nieuwe, die hij voor deze meebracht, ...  
 'But the immediate goal of his<sub>i</sub> [=Erasmus'] journey was to go and, at Froben's<sub>j</sub> in Basel, take care of the printing of the innumerable works, old and new, that he<sub>i</sub> had brought for HIM<sub>j</sub>.'

The conclusion towards which these data lead is thus that the excluded antecedent of an anaphoric demonstrative pronoun is the topic, and that any other noun phrase can be its actual antecedent. Further confirmation of this can be found from some elicited data. In Dutch, preposing of a nonsubject noun phrase indicates contrast, not topic. In (33)–(34), the postposed unstressed pronoun *hij* 'he' remains as topic, while *de jongen* 'the boy' is contrastive:

- (33) De jongen heeft hij niet gezien, want hij was binnen.  
 'The boy<sub>j</sub> he<sub>i</sub> didn't see, because he<sub>i>j</sub> was inside.'  
 (34) De jongen heeft hij niet gezien, want die was binnen.  
 'The boy<sub>j</sub> he<sub>i</sub> didn't see, because HE<sub>j</sub> was inside.'

Our expectation, which is borne out, would thus be that the personal pronoun can refer to either noun phrase, but with a preference for referring back to the topic (and, incidentally, subject) *hij*, while the demonstrative pronoun would have to refer back to the nontopic, *de jongen*. Note that examples of this kind exclude the possibility of linear order as the sole conditioning factor.

The examples discussed so far have all involved two potential antecedents for an anaphoric demonstrative pronoun, one of which is excluded and one of which is actualized. A greater number of participants is, of course, possible, as is illustrated in some of the following examples. The passage reproduced in (35) is about *Stunica*.

- (35) Van 1516 af stond al het potje te vuur van een Spaans theoloog aan de universiteit te Alcalá, Diego Lopez Zuñiga of in het Latijn *Stunica*. Het betrof de Annotaties op de uitgave van het Nieuwe Testament, „een tweede Lee”, zei Erasmus. Eerst had kardinaal Ximenes de publicatie verboden, maar na diens dood kwam zij los, in 1520. Enige jaren bleef *Stunica* Erasmus met zijn kritiek vervolgen, tot diens grote ergernis; tenslotte kwam er, waarschijnlijk naarmate Erasmus conservatiever werd, een toenadering en een welwillende houding van *Stunica*'s zijde.  
 'Starting in 1516 punishment was being prepared in reserve, from a Spanish theologian at the University of Alcalá, Diego Lopez Zuñiga or in Latin *Stunica*<sub>i</sub>. It concerned the Annotations to the edition of the New Testament, "a second Lee", said Erasmus. At first Cardinal Ximenes<sub>j</sub> had forbidden the publication, but after HIS<sub>j</sub> death it came out, in 1520. For some years *Stunica*<sub>i</sub> continued persecuting Erasmus<sub>k</sub> with his<sub>i</sub> criticism, to HIS<sub>k</sub> great annoyance; in the end, probably as Erasmus became more conservative, there came about a rapprochement and a sympathetic attitude from *Stunica*'s side.'

Two other participants are introduced, Cardinal Ximenes and Erasmus. References back to Stunica are consistently by means of personal pronouns, those to either of the others just as consistently by means of demonstrative pronouns.

Another factor that needs to be introduced to complete the discussion is what happens when one has continuing reference back to an antecedent that is first referred back to by means of a demonstrative pronoun. Two strategies seem to be available. First, one can "reset" the anaphors back to personal pronouns, as in (32), where Erasmus is first referred back to, in the second sentence, as *deze*, and then in the third sentence as *hij*:

- (36) Eschenfelder had Erasmus gevraagd, hem een psalmverklaring te willen wijden (de vorm, die Erasmus in de laatste jaren meermalen koos). In het eind van 1535 herinnerde deze zich dat verzoek. Hij wist niet meer, of Eschenfelder een bepaalde psalm had aangegeven; ... (H)  
'Eschenfelder<sub>i</sub> had asked Erasmus<sub>j</sub> to dedicate a psalm to him<sub>i</sub> (the form that Erasmus chose several times in his last years). At the end of 1535 HE<sub>j</sub> remembered that request. He<sub>i</sub> no longer knew if Eschenfelder had indicated a particular psalm; ...'

This same strategy is found in (37), where the means of reference back to *Luther* shifts from *diens* to *zijn*:

- (37) Hij voor zich kent Luther niet; hij heeft diens geschriften nog slechts vluchtig ingezien, maar iedereen prijst zijn levenswandel. (H)  
'He<sub>i</sub> [=Erasmus] for himself does not know Luther; he<sub>i</sub> has only fleetingly glanced at HIS<sub>j</sub> writings, but everyone praises his<sub>j</sub> life style.'

However, it is also possible to continue with the demonstrative, as in (38), where reference back to *Aldus* is consistently by means of *diens*:

- (38) Wat hem tot Aldus trok, was zonder twijfel, naast de beroemdheit van diens zaak, zijn verliefdheid op diens mooie typen, „die allerfreaiste lettertjes, vooral die hele kleintjes.” (H)  
'What drove him<sub>i</sub> [=Erasmus] to Aldus<sub>j</sub> was without doubt, beside the fame of HIS<sub>j</sub> business, his<sub>i</sub> love of HIS<sub>j</sub> beautiful typefaces, "the prettiest letters, especially the real small ones".'

I do not have enough relevant examples to establish what factors may favor either of these choices. The resetting to the personal pronoun could of course simply reflect the fact that, in Dutch, personal pronouns are always possible; compare the discussion of example (27). It would be interesting, however, to examine if the difference might not reflect subtle differences in assignment of degrees of topicality to noun phrases.

The existence of different strategies for continuing reference back to an antecedent, coupled with the fact that the overall system makes only a binary distinction (personal versus demonstrative pronoun), can lead to ambiguity where more than two participants are involved. Consider, for instance, example (39):

- (39) In oktober was Erasmus te Oxford, waar het hem aanvankelijk niet aange- naam leek, doch waarheen Montjoy hem zou volgen. Hij was aanbevolen aan John Colet, die vriendelijk verklaarde, geen aanbeveling meer nodig te hebben; hij kende Erasmus reeds uit diens brief aan Gaguin, in diens historiewerk, en had een hoge dunk van zijn geleerdheid. (H)  
 'In October Erasmus was in Oxford, where at first things did not please him, but where Montjoy was to follow him. He was recommended to John Colet<sub>i</sub>, who explained in a friendly manner that he<sub>i</sub> no longer needed a recommendation; he<sub>i</sub> already knew Erasmus<sub>j</sub> from HIS<sub>j</sub> letter to Gaguin<sub>k</sub>, in HIS<sub>k</sub> history work, and had a high opinion of his learning.'

The topic of the immediately relevant part, following the semicolon of the last sentence, is John Colet. The first occurrence of *diens* refers back to the less preferred antecedent, i.e. the letter is Erasmus'. From the broader context—linguistic, perhaps also in part also real-world—it is clear that the second *diens* refers back to *Gaguin*, i.e. Gaguin is the author of the history work referred to. However, out of context, there is nothing to prevent this second *diens* from being taken as referring back to Erasmus, and this is the interpretation typically assigned when the example is presented out of context.

#### 4. Conclusion and prospects

In this paper, I have tried to argue that the use of demonstrative pronouns as anaphors in Dutch is conditioned pragmatically, by means of topic-comment structure, with the demonstrative excluding as antecedent the topic and requiring some nontopical actual antecedent. While I have used a substantial database in order to illustrate this claim, there is of course much more that could be done to strengthen (and perhaps modify—or even overturn?) it, for instance by collecting an even larger corpus of crucial examples to which real quantitative analysis can be applied. I leave this as a task for future research.

One obvious question that arises is: How does this Dutch phenomenon fit into the general background of reference-tracking devices? It shows clear similarities to some other reference-tracking devices, but is probably not identical to any of the better-known types. For instance, the use of the demonstrative pronoun might be compared with the use of stressed pronouns in English, as a means of indicating a less expected antecedent. But there is a crucial difference, as can be seen in example (40), where italics indicates emphasis:

- (40) Wim sloeg Piet, en toen sloeg *die hem*.  
 'Wim<sub>i</sub> hit Piet<sub>j</sub>, and then *HE<sub>j</sub>* hit *him<sub>i</sub>*.'

In the English version, both pronouns receive emphasis, indicating that for each pronoun there is a change of grammatical relation/semantic role relative to the first clause. In the Dutch version too, both pronouns receive emphasis. However, only one of the pronouns is demonstrative, namely the one referring back to the nontopical antecedent of the first clause. The pronoun referring back to the topic of the first clause is emphatic, but a personal pronoun, i.e. in Dutch the emphatic/nonemphatic distinction does not coincide exactly with the demonstrative/personal pronoun distinction.

A close parallel might seem to be obviation in Algonquian languages. The demonstrative pronouns would correspond to obviative marking, the personal pro-

nouns to proximate; one would even find the striking parallel possibility of “resetting” to proximate after use of the obviative to refer to a participant. The main difference would be that Dutch has no inflectional morphology marking the distinction. But some further examples from Dutch suggest that there may be a more important difference. In the examples considered so far, there have always been (at least) two potential antecedents, one excluded (on the basis of high topicality), the other actualized. Data presented by Geerts et al. (1984: 218)—example (41) below—and confirmed by an example from the newspaper *Trouw* (17 September 1993) in the Nijmegen corpus—example (42) below—suggest that it is possible to use the demonstrative pronoun as an anaphor even in the absence of an excluded antecedent, provided the antecedent is low in topicality; in (41)–(42), the antecedent is focus:

- (41) Toen sprak de minister van Justitie. Deze hield staande dat de gevangenisoverheid geen schuld had aan de ontsnapping van de misdadigers.  
 ‘Then the Minister of Justice<sub>j</sub> spoke. HE<sub>j</sub> maintained that the prison authorities bore no responsibility for the escape of the criminals.’
- (42) Nadat gekozen is verdwijnt degene die is afgewezen uit beeld. Vervolgens wordt een andere patient of diens vertegenwoordiger aan het publiek voorgesteld.  
 ‘After the choice has been made, the one who has been rejected disappears from the picture. Thereupon another patient<sub>j</sub> or HIS<sub>j</sub> representative is introduced to the public.’

In Algonquian languages, it is not possible to have an obviative in a discourse segment in which there is no proximate. In conclusion, then, the Dutch construction shares obvious similarities with other, better described phenomena, but also seems to have some interesting properties of its own.

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