

Accord, Discord and Deixis in Tagalog Demonstratives

Author(s): Steven Fincke

Proceedings of the Twenty-First Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society: Special Session on Discourse in Southeast Asian Languages (1995), pp. 83-94

Please see “How to cite” in the online sidebar for full citation information.

Please contact BLS regarding any further use of this work. BLS retains copyright for both print and screen forms of the publication. BLS may be contacted via <http://linguistics.berkeley.edu/bls/>.

The Annual Proceedings of the Berkeley Linguistics Society is published online via [eLanguage](#), the Linguistic Society of America's digital publishing platform.

Accord, Discord and Deixis in Tagalog Demonstratives

Steven Fincke

University of California, Santa Barbara

1. Introduction¹

Tagalog has a three-way deictic system.² This paper will present a new analysis of the alternation between the proximal, medial and distal forms of Tagalog demonstratives based on tracking propositions according to their interactional properties. The distal form is for propositions that have the interactional status of accord. When they have the status of discord, deixis indicates which participant made the proposition available to the interaction. The proximal form indicates the speaker, and the medial indicates all others.

2. Database

The database for this study consists of twelve episodes of the Philippine morning talk show *Kape at Balita* (Coffee and News). The topics of the shows are political, and there is only one topic for each half hour episode. The show is broadcast over the GMA television network out of Quezon City and is simulcast over DZBB radio. My twelve episodes were recorded from the televised form during the month of August 1994.

There are two hosts for the show, one in the radio studio and one in the television studio; there are television cameras in both studios, so what is going on in both places is shown at different times. The guests usually are in the television studio with the television host, but sometimes they call in by telephone. The show is all conversation, except for portions of the introductions to the episodes which are sometimes read, and the conversation is usually formal: turns are often long, and there is generally little overlap.

This data contain approximately 3,000 demonstrative tokens.³ This analysis is based primarily on the tokens in five of the twelve episodes.

3. A previous analysis

As in many other languages, deixis in Tagalog demonstratives is usually analyzed in terms of space (Blake 1925, Llamzon 1976, Ramos 1971a, 1971b, Schachter and Otones 1972). While there are a few variations, the traditional spatial analysis of the deictic forms is that the proximal is used for referents near the speaker, the medial is used for things near the addressee or not as close to the speaker, and the distal is used for things far away from all participants. Schachter and Otones (1972) offer a two-part analysis. The traditional one above was associated with concrete referents, but deictic usage with things beside concrete objects was analyzed in terms of 'psychological distance' (Schachter and Otones 1972:92). They argued that the deictic distinction indicates who is most closely associated with the referent. The proximal would be used to indicate the speaker, the medial would

indicate the addressee, and the distal would indicate that neither are associated.

4. Testing the traditional spatial deixis approach

The first question that needs to be asked of my data is whether the traditional spatial approach works for it or not; I will only address concrete referents to make the comments here relevant to Schachter and Otones' analysis as well. Because the show's topics are political and, hence, mostly abstract, there is generally little interest in particular concrete objects, but I was able to find a few examples.

One of the twelve episodes was about impeachment charges that had been filed against Vice President Estrada. The situation arose when he received a \$37,000 Cadillac from a friend in Los Angeles. The main focus of the charges had to do with whether it was appropriate for him to have the Office of the Vice President pay the exorbitant import tax on the car.

This episode offers an opportunity to test the spatial approach because the Cadillac is referred to often. If this approach is appropriate for my data, the deictic forms that participants use in referring to the car should indicate where the car is relative to the participants. Given that the car is in the Vice President's use, it is probably in the Manila area. There are four participants in the television studio; listing from the viewer's left, there are Representative Sergio Apostol, Justice Hermogenes Concepcion, Chairman Manuel Morato and television host Jessica Soho. In the radio studio, there is only the radio host Bobby Guanzon.

The following six examples illustrate the deictic forms that different participants use. First, Justice Concepcion uses both the proximal and distal forms. In example (1), he uses the emphatic form in which there are demonstratives before and after the nominal. His addressee is Bobby Guanzon in the radio studio. Therefore, in the traditional framework, he is locating the car closer to himself in the television studio than Bobby in the radio studio.

- (1)⁴ Concepcion: *dinoneyt ng a kapatid ng vice president*
donated N uh friend N vice president
itong oto ito to the office of the vice
DEM.PROX.T.LNK car.LNK DEM.PROX.T to the office of the vice
president [KADILAK:317-318]
president
'The friend of the Vice President donated **this** (very) car to the Office of the
Vice President.'⁵

At another time, he uses the distal. His addressee, once again, is Bobby in the radio studio, so according to the traditional spatial analysis, the demonstrative would indicate that the car is far from both Concepcion and Bobby.

- (2) Concepcion: *iyong up- u- unang complaint for*
 DEM.DIST.T.LNK first-.LNK complaint for
impeachment tungkol doon sa oto kadilak
 impeachment about DEM.DIST.O O automobile Cadillac
 [KADILAK:161-162]
 'That first complaint for impeachment about **that** Cadillac (car).'

Another one of the guests in the television studio, Chairman Morato, uses the proximal and medial at different times. In example (3), he uses the proximal demonstrative. Here, Morato's addressee is Concepcion, so the demonstrative would indicate that the car is closer to Morato than to Concepcion, seated next to him.

- (3) Morato: *huwag ninyong sabihin na itoy binigay sa*
 O NEG.IMP 2PL.N.LNK say LNK DEM.PROX.T-INV given
office of the vice president [KADILAK:405-406]
 office of the vice president
 'Don't say that **this** (car) was given to the Office of the Vice President.'

In the next example, he uses the medial in the emphatic form, as in example (1). Here, Morato's addressee is Concepcion yet again. These deictic tokens would indicate that the car is closer to Morato than Concepcion.

- (4) Morato: *it is a conditional donation with a reversion clause na*
 it is a conditional donation with a reversion clause LNK
yan pong kotse yan ay babalik sa kanyang
 DEM.MED.T POL-LNK car DEM.MED.T INV will.return O 3S.O.LNK
kapatid after four years [KADILAK:387-391]
 friend after four years
 'It is a conditional donation with a reversion clause that **that** (very) car will return to his friend after four years.'

In example (5), Jessica Soho uses the medial demonstratives emphatically. Jessica's addressee is Morato; the demonstratives would indicate that the car is closer to Morato than Jessica.

- (5) Jessica: *sinasabi ninyo chairman may duda ho kayo kung donation*
 say 2PL.N chairman EXIST doubt POL 2PL.O if donation
ho ba talaga yang kadilak na yan
 POL Q? truly DEM.MED.T.LNK Cadillac LNK DEM.MED.T
 [KADILAK:440-441]
 'Are you saying, Chairman, you have doubts whether **that** (very) Cadillac was truly a donation?'

Lastly, the host in the radio studio, Bobby Guanzon uses the proximal. His addressee is Sergio Apostol, the third television guest. This form would indicate that the car is closer to Bobby in the radio studio than to Apostol in the television studio.

- (6) Bobby: *itong a complaint na to ay nakasentro*
 DEM.DIST.T.LNK uh complaint LNK DEM.PROX.T INV centered
lang dito sa kadilak [KADILAK:126]
 only DEM.PROX.O O Cadillac
 'This (very) complaint is centered just on **this** Cadillac.'

The traditional spatial approach clearly fails to predict the selection of deictic forms in these examples. The spatial interpretations of the tokens in all these examples fail to indicate where the car might be. Indeed, some examples are contradictory in a spatial analysis. (3) indicates the car is closer to Morato than to Concepcion while (4) indicates that it is closer to Concepcion than to Morato. Also, (1) would indicate that the car is closer to Concepcion in the television studio than to Bobby in the radio studio, but (6) would indicate that the car is closer to Bobby in the radio studio than to Apostol in the television studio. The car has to be either equidistant from both studios or closer to just one than the other.

5. A new analysis

The preceding section showed how a concrete spatial approach to deixis in demonstratives can fail. There has been a growing consensus that concrete space alone is not the basis of deixis in demonstratives. There have been analyses, such as Hanks (1990) on Maya and Laury (to appear) on Finnish, that have dispensed with concrete space being the basis of deixis and have put social relations of various sorts in its place. The approach I propose below is like these in that it does not involve concrete space, and the basis is social.

5.1 Basic notions

Discourse entities are things that can be tracked through the use of anaphora (DuBois 1980). Discourse entities always have something predicated of them. At the very least, the selection of a particular head noun in the referring expression predicates on category membership.

Referring involves what will be called *referring from* propositions, bringing predications relating to the discourse entity and its properties from other propositions into referring acts. Tracking occurs when some of the propositions being referred from were made available by the interaction. Propositions can be made available in the interaction in various ways. They can be explicitly stated, inferred or indicated by non-verbal behavior or the physical environment.

Deixis in Tagalog demonstratives is used to indicate propositions. When demonstratives are used refer to propositions, the deictic form gives some

pong letrang [ɛf] e [ɛfe] [PILIPINO:86-92]
 POL.LNK letter.LNK 'F' PART 'F'
 'We need to clarify why 'Filipino', not 'Pilipino' even though the letter 'F'
 [ɛf], uh, 'F' [ɛfe] doesn't exist in our alphabet.'

Notice that in the second line she uses a distal demonstrative in referring to the alphabet. This is expected in my analysis. Here, the demonstrative is indicating that predications from propositions about the nature of the Tagalog alphabet, including the lack of an 'F' are being brought into the current proposition. Because these propositions are ones that the speaker can assume that the other participants know, the distal form is expected.

Situations can lead speakers to infer that propositions are common knowledge can arise in various ways. Another is through all being exposed to the same event. An episode about the Cairo population conference illustrates this. This United Nations conference was held in Cairo fall 1994, a few weeks before this episode was recorded. The Catholic Church became involved in the conference because the preliminary document that was drafted in New York and was to be approved in Cairo included a section on abortion. Cardinal Sin, the Archbishop of Manila, made a speech on television the day before this episode was recorded. He argued that the Philippines should not send representatives to the conference because participation could lead to the Philippines being forced to legalize abortion. From the interaction, it is clear that all the participants watched Cardinal Sin's speech, so they can assume that they share a set of propositions from it. Therefore, every time in the interaction that speakers refer from propositions conveyed by Sin in his speech and use a demonstrative, the distal form should be used.

One of the guests is J. Prospero deVera; he is one of the government officials that is still planning to go to the Cairo conference despite the Cardinal's appeal. Jessica Soho, the television host, asks him about the Cardinal's speech; example (8) is part of her question.

- (8) Jessica: *ano hong assessment ninyo doon sa nakita*
 what POL.LNK assessment 2PL.N DEM.DIST.O O saw
ninyong kahapon [POPULATION:105]
 2PL.N.LNK yesterday
 'What is your assessment of **that** which you saw yesterday?'

Here, Jessica uses a demonstrative in referring to what deVera saw on television: the Cardinal's speech. In referring to the speech, she is referring from the propositions conveyed within it; she clearly wants him to discuss what was said, not some other aspect of the program. Therefore, the distal form is the one expected, and that is the one she uses.

DeVera follows with a long turn responding to this question. In his speech, the Cardinal said several things about the delegations to the New York and Cairo

meetings, both of which deVera is a part of, and about deVera himself. By answering the question, deVera is essentially responding to the Cardinal's allegations. Because of this, he repeatedly refers from the Cardinal's speech with demonstratives and uses the distal. Example (9) is a part of this turn.

- (9) deVera: *unang-una miyembro ako nung delegasyon na*
 first-LNK-first member 1S.T DEM.DIST.N.LNK
 LNK
nagpunta sa preparatory meeting sa New York at pupunta ako
 went O preparatory meeting O New York and will.go 1S.T
pupunta ako sa Cairo [POPULATION:120-121]
 will.go 1S.T O Cairo
 'I am the lead member of **that** delegation that went to the preparatory meeting in New York, and I will go to Cairo.'

In this example, deVera is discussing the delegation's attendance at various conferences despite the Cardinal's arguments. He uses a demonstrative in referring to the delegation to New York. He is responding to the Cardinal's speech here and referring from it, so he uses the distal form.

The three preceding examples have shown how referring from a proposition that can be inferred to be shared knowledge goes along with accord status and the use of the distal form. The next example will show how there is discord when there are indications that the proposition being evoked is not shared knowledge. In this example, like many others in my data, this sort of discord is indicated by the use of the proximal or medial. Continuing with a later portion of the episode on the Cairo conference, the radio host Lito Villarosa asks deVera about a statement he made at the preparatory meeting in New York. The host asks him whether he discussed the legalization of abortion. Apparently, the Cardinal said that he had said something like this, and the Cardinal was the host's only source on this. DeVera's response indicates that the Cardinal's charge was based on something that he said, but that it was inaccurate. In example (10), deVera gives his own characterization of what he had said.

- (10) deVera: *sa ibang bansa ito ay legal a hindi sinabi*
 O other.LNK nation DEM.PROX.T INV legal uh NEG said
na dapat maging legal ito sa lahat ng bansa
 LNK must become legal DEM.DIST.T O all N
 nation

[POPULATION:206-207]

'**This** (abortion) is legal in other nations. (I) didn't say that **this** (abortion) must become legal in all nations.'

Notice here that deVera uses proximal demonstratives twice in referring to abortion.

made was that the Cadillac was given to the Vice President. He then proceeds to assert his opposing view. The example here is the same as (1).

- (12) Concepcion: *dinoneyt ng a kapatid ng vice president*
 donated N uh friend N vice president
itong oto ito to the office of the vice
DEM.PROX.T.LNK car.LNK **DEM.PROX.T** to the office of the vice
president [KADILAK:317-318]
 president
 'The friend of the Vice President donated **this** (very) car to the Office of the Vice President.'

Morato makes it clear at other times that he has a posture toward the proposition in (12) that is inconsistent with the speaker's. Concepcion used demonstratives in referring to the car. The demonstratives are indicating that the car is being tracked from the propositions conveyed by the clause itself and preceding sections of his turn. He is drawing from propositions in his own line of argument, not others, such as those supplied by Morato. With the clear social inconsistency in posture, there is discord. With this and the fact that it is the speaker making the proposition available to the interaction, the proximal form is suggested by my analysis. The proximal is what he used both times. This is a frequently-occurring pattern in my data.

Concepcion continues for a while longer, discussing other allegations. As his turn ends, Morato begins. The first thing he says is example (13).

- (13) Morato: *hindi po totoo yan Justice* [KADILAK: 378]
 NEG POL true **DEM.MED.T** Justice
 'That's not true, Justice.'

This sentence is clearly confrontational; it's quite clear that Concepcion would assert his truthfulness. By saying this, Morato is clearly indicating that he disagrees with what Concepcion said. Because of the disagreement, there is discord. Since Concepcion was the one making his turn and its content available to the interaction, Concepcion should be the one indicated through deixis. He is not the speaker, so the medial would be the appropriate form. That is the one that Morato uses. The use of the medial in such situations is also quite common in my data.

The claim about social consistency in indicated posture holds up too. There is a common pattern in which all participants indicate consistent postures toward a proposition or group of propositions, and distal forms are used when referring from them. One example can be found in an episode about environmental issues. The discussion gets into the topic of the pollution of the Pasig River which runs through Manila. A consensus was established among the participants that the most significant source of pollution was from squatters living along the river disposing of their wastes into the waters. One of the guests mentions that sixty percent of the waste in the

Pasig River comes from squatters and discusses plans for relocating them. The radio host Bobby Guanzon says that he feels that the squatting problem is quite bad and calls for change. The television host Jessica Soho mentions that she had thought about the problem of water pollution. She says that she has observed the same pattern of people living near waterways and polluting in other parts of the country. She suggests that the pattern of behavior is due to cultural attitudes and calls for cultural change. Part of this is example (14).

- (14) Jessica: *bakit pagka- nakatira ang mga tao sa daluyan ng tubig*
 why reside T PL person O source N water
sa ilog o sa dagat? sila yung madudumi ano sila
 O river or O ocean 3PL.T DEM.DIST.T.LNK will.pollute what 3PL.T
yung nagdudump [ENVIRONMENT:980-985]
 DEM.DIST.T.LNK are.dumping
 ‘Why do people live near a source of water, a river or the ocean? They are **those** who will pollute. Well, they are **those** who are dumping.’

In this example, Jessica uses demonstratives in referring to the polluters and dumpers. The demonstratives indicate that Jessica is referring from the propositions in her turn; some of the propositions she is tracking from are those about *mga tao* ‘people’ earlier in the quote. This is new information to the interaction in that she is generalizing about the Philippines, not just the Pasig River. However, what she says in the example is clearly based on the consensus that the others had reached about the squatters on the Pasig. With this consensus, the speaker can infer that others will indicate a posture like hers toward the propositions in her speech. With no social inconsistency in posture, the distal is predicted, and that is the form she used both times.

6. Conclusion

In this paper I have shown how Tagalog speakers use deixis in demonstratives to indicate two things about propositions: who made the propositions available to the current interaction and whether there is social inconsistency in their contributions regarding the propositions. The two factors that I demonstrated as affecting deixis are: 1) whether all participants indicate knowledge of the propositions, and 2) whether all indicate a consistent posture. I showed that the proximal form is used when there is discord and the speaker was the one who made the proposition available to the interaction, and the medial form was shown to be used when it was another participant. The distal is the form used when there is accord.

My analysis is strongly social and does not appeal to concrete space or a space metaphor. I have shown how the traditional spatial approach and Schachter and Otanes’ ‘psychological distance’ approach for non-concrete referents do not account for the distribution of deictic forms in my data. This data raises the question whether my social analysis is appropriate for other sorts of topics and genres as well. Are

there situations in which a concrete spatial analysis of deixis is necessary? The only way to address this question is to examine natural interactions in which the participants are likely to be concerned with spatial relations. This is an important question for further research.

Notes

1. I thank Susanna Cumming, Jack DuBois, Nicholas Kibre, Marianne Mithun, Carl Rubino, Robin Shoaps, and Sandra Thompson for their helpful comments. I also thank my Tagalog consultant and transcriptionist Cheryl Contreras. However, any errors in this paper are my own.
2. Some sources argue that there is a four-way deictic distinction, but Schachter and Otnes (1972) mention that the nearest of the four is used little, if at all, by educated Manila speakers. This form was essentially absent from my data, and I am not considering it in my study.
3. For this study, I looked at all sorts of uses of the demonstratives except for usage in the compound *mayroon* and when demonstratives are used as verb roots.
4. A list of abbreviations precedes the references at the end of the paper.
5. Notice that I have translated *kapatid* here as ‘friend’. The literal meaning is ‘sibling’, but other portions of the interaction make it clear that the donor was not Vice President Estrada’s brother.

Abbreviations

DEM	demonstrative	MED	medial
DIST	distal	N	non-trigger
IMP	imperative	NEG	negative
IMV	inversion	O	oblique
LNK	linker	POL	polite
PL	plural	1IN	first person plural inclusive
PROX	proximate	2PL	second person plural
Q?	question marker	3S	third person singular
T	trigger	3PL	third person plural
1S	first person singular		

References

- Blake, Frank R. 1925. A grammar of the Tagalog language. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- DuBois, John W. 1980. Beyond definiteness. The pear stories: cognitive, cultural, and linguistic aspects of narrative production, ed. by Wallace L. Chafe. Norwood, N.J.: Ablex Publishing Corporation.
- Hanks, William F. 1990. Referential practice: language and lived space among the Maya. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Kape at balita. August, 1994. Quezon City: GMA Television Network.
- Laury, Ritva. To Appear. The use and development of demonstratives in spoken Finnish. Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Santa Barbara.
- Llamzon, Teodoro. 1976. Modern Tagalog: a functional-structural description. The Hague: Mouton.
- Ramos, Teresita V. 1971a. Tagalog dictionary. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- _____. 1971b. Tagalog structures. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Schachter, Paul and Fe Otones. 1972. Tagalog reference grammar. Berkeley: University of California Press.