PRONOMINAL *THIS*: DEICTIC OF COMMITMENT[*]

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Abstract: This paper shows that a particular utterance examined in its discourse context operates on multiple linguistic levels. On syntactic level, the utterance which contains the ascriptive formula øThis is a(n)+ Adj+Nø with the subject *this* referring to a human can be analyzed in terms of congruity between its reference formulation and the local syntactic norm of the discourse. On the semantic level, the same utterance can be read as a sequence functioning as an assessment. Finally, on interactional level, the utterance is recognized as an act of the speakerøs commitment to their own words.

Keywords: conversation analysis, interactional goals, deixis, proximal demonstrative

1 Introduction

As is known, the development of discourse and pragmatic competence in foreign learners does not always keep pace with that of linguistic competence. One way of promoting such development is, undoubtedly, awareness raising, especially in advanced learners. However, awareness raising presupposes that we can provide explicit descriptions of the discourse and pragmatic phenomena we want to teach.

Difficulties in the use of various referring expressions may be due to crosslinguistic differences, or to the fact that course developers (or even discourse analysts) cannot always formulate explicit rules on certain phenomena. Therefore, it seems obvious that shedding light on a specific problem in the use of deictic *this* can serve the purpose of drawing attention to the importance of discourse competence.

The purpose of the present paper is to analyze a single utterance embedded in its discourse context. The enterprise implies an understanding of two facts. First, a single instance does not readily lend itself to generalizations due to difficulty in distinguishing between systematic and idiosyncratic features of the phenomenon at issue. Second, the key to the interpretation of discourse is never fully contained in the semantic content of words spoken or written. Interpretation as an active process is constrained spatially and temporally, and when the context changes, interpretation may change accordingly. Thus a plausible action to take under such circumstances is to attempt to reconstruct the original context of the discourse to be analyzed as closely as possible. That way not only is the analyst in the position to access and account for some of the relevant details, but since the data remain accessible generally, the analysis might gain validation from findings by other researchers or in similar lines of research, at any future time.

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Nowadays videotaped data are the richest sources available. Not only can videotaping reveal non-verbal turns at talk, for instance, responses by nodding or shaking heads, but it can also give evidence of the relationships of orientations that participants display to each other throughout the interaction. For example, Ford and Fox (1996) found that participants' body posture and eye gaze added to an exhibition of their attention to the interaction, which, in turn, constantly shaped and reshaped the form and content of their talk.

Although the present study is based on merely audiotaped data, the analyst of the speech event and author of the present paper, in the role of interviewer (GY), had the advantage of having been a coparticipant throughout the whole interaction.

The excerpt to be analyzed is drawn from one of six sociolinguistic interviews made in October, 1996. The utterance at issue, 82, appears as follows:

> GY: So does that mean ... that she's intelligent?
>   ......
> 82   MR: She's a- this is an intelligent woman.

(The number before the utterance shows its placement in the excerpt transcribed. The hyphen after *a* in the answer indicates abrupt break-off of the unit. See the utterance in its broader context in **4**.)

Her self-repair suggests that the interviewee, MR, found the demonstrative pronoun *this* more adequate than any other referential option in the given context. It should be borne in mind that 82 contains the proximal demonstrative pronoun to identify a human referent, which is, therefore, an atypical anaphoric device. Yet, 82 is a real-life utterance and as such can be viewed as a social action oriented to some norm. As a consequence, an understanding of 82 involves relating its syntactic and semantic properties to its function as a vehicle of interactional goals. The fact that the speaker has chosen to use for reference formulation a proximal demonstrative, rather than a corresponding personal pronoun, some form of a proper name, a common noun, a demonstrative adjective plus any kind of reference form, or any combination of those listed, naturally raises the following question: What property of the demonstrative *this* makes it the preferred anaphoric device in the particular context of 82 even when reference is made to a human?

2 The excerpt and its background

The subjects selected for the sociolinguistic interviews were females, of similar age and social status, which served two purposes. First, it was to decrease the sociolinguistic variables involved with subjects. Second, since the interviewer also fell within the same category of age, sex and social status, the selection of the subjects was meant to make it easier for the interviewer to align with her subjects. They were chosen for one more reason, namely they were all friends or acquaintances of the interviewer's.

Despite the case of observer's paradox as formulated in Labov (1972) and the more or less preplanned nature of interviews, it is claimed that the utterance under discussion can be regarded as part of naturally occurring conversation. Support for the naturalness of utterance 82 might come from two sources. First, it was not intentionally elicited. To be

sure, GY focussing on particular problems in the interview did prompt her subject in a way to produce an answer to the point. But she could not have ó even if she had meant to ó imposed any linguistic formula on MR. Moreover, it was not until listening to the recordings that GY discovered the utterance at issue and its possible implications and came to entertain the idea of preserving the recordings for further research. Second, the interview at issue might qualify as conversation rather than a more formal genre, based on four out of Cook's (1989, p.51) five criteria. Namely, the power relations between GY and MR were balanced, no participant other than GY and MR was present, the turns were short, and the talk itself was not meant for an outside audience. The only difference lies in the domain of topic/theme management. While in conversation proper, topics are created jointly and they may be picked up or rejected by participants most of the time, in interviews the topics introduced by the interviewer are supposed to be accepted by the interviewee, as part of their previous arrangement.

3 Typology of definite referring expressions

From a semantic point of view, definite referring expressions inform the recipient of talk that a specific entity or group of entities is being referred to. Lyons (1977) claims that all kinds of definite referring expression ó whether proper names, descriptions, personal or demonstrative pronouns ó can be successfully employed for reference, and the manner of referring will, first of all, depend on the recipient's knowledge of the referent in the specific speech situation.

Lyons discusses the system of definite referring expressions within the general framework of deixis, insofar as all definite referring expressions can refer to a situationally given entity. While proper names select the referent without giving the addressee any further information, descriptions and personal pronouns inform the addressee of what the referent is like, or what class of entities the referent belongs to. Demonstrative pronouns, on the other hand, locate the referent in physical space, i.e., within the speech situation, in order to establish it in abstract space, i.e., within the universe of discourse. Since he holds the assumption that the similarities in the structure of languages are to be attributed to the fact that they have developed for face-to-face communication, Lyons, with most other scholars, considers deixis to be more basic than anaphora or definiteness. This view seems to be supported by three facts. First, demonstratives have been found in all languages as opposed to definite articles. Second, with respect to order of native language acquisition, deixis precedes anaphora and definiteness. Third, historically, third-person anaphoric pronouns and definite articles developed from demonstratives.

Ariel (1998, p.197) accepts the basicness of deixis in one respect only: "it facilitates communication when language is not available to communicators. [Deixis] markers may have a short-term stage in which they can be seen as primary then: in language acquisition and pidginization". But she takes issue with the basicness analysis of deixis in general, citing statistical evidence to show that referring to the speech situation is not basic cognitively, and marking and interpretation of the speech situation is not basic linguistically. She proposes that rather than being specialized for the speech situation or the universe of discourse or the speakers' shared background knowledge, all definite referring expressions can retrieve entities from all cognitive domains of givenness: physical, discourse, and knowledge givenness. Despite her claim that recipients employ all possible linguistic and extralinguistic means to get at the intended referent, Ariel sets up a hierarchy for memory accessibility of unmarked/semantic reference. As is to be expected, proper names and

definite descriptions in any combinations mark less accessible mental entities, therefore they score high on the scale, while anaphoric pronouns combined with stress and gestures mark more accessible mental entities, therefore they score low on the scale. Demonstratives are what she calls intermediate-accessibility markers.

4 The utterance in context

The following extract is only a small fragment of the whole interview. In it, the interviewer continues checking through her list of questions to hear MR's opinion of the two main characters of the novel under discussion. (The excerpt is transcribed according to Du Bois, *et al.*, 1992. See the explanation of the transcription symbols in the Appendix.)

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1    GY:           Was he /masculine,/
2    MR: (... )    \Yes.\
3    *      (1s)   \Definitely.\
((Several lines of transcript ellipted))
4    GY: (1,5s)  /Mhm,/
5    *      (1s)   <P /Mhm,/ P>
6    *      (3s)   <P<LO Was he the /strong and silent type,/ LO>P>
7    MR:           We[@H(x) \@H(x)yeaH(x).\]
8    GY:              [@@@@@@@@@@@]@[[@@@@@@]]@[[[@]]]@@
9    MR:                              [[\@Ri=gH(x).\]]
10   *                                             [[[@]]]
11   *              g∂%- [[[[I guess \'that's it,\]]]]
12   GY:              [[[[@@@@@@@@]]]]@[@@@@]
13   MR:                          [You know] ai- a-a- bit of \tha=t,\
14   GY:           <SML /Aha,/ SML> (1s) @
15   MR:           H(x)[@@]
16   GY:              [@@]@ (..) H(x)@
17   *              A/ha,/
18   *              An- an- was Francesca /feminine,/
19   MR: (2s)       (H)\/Ye=s,/
20   *              Bu- but also <HI \guarded,\ HI>
21   *              \Too.\
22   *              <A \B- guarded too.\ A>
23   *              I would%- certainly you \could not,\
24   *              categorize her (.) (H) a=s a= a giggly \schoolgirl.\
25   *              [(H)]
26   GY:           [\No.\]
27   MR:           /Though,/
27   *              there was a little (..) /bit,/
28   *              _of that,_
29   *              that entered \into it,_
30   *              in that she was 'preening herself before the /mi=rror,_
31   *              and checking her /dre=ss,_
32   *              and- (H) making sort of a <X 'quiet X> /entrance down,_
33   *              to the /kitchen,_
34   *              (H) when she had her special /dress on,_
35   *              (H) So there's 'certainly tha=t --
36   *      (.)     a<% = = %> kind of % \schoolgirl,\
37   *              \quality that comes through,_
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38	*		As I think a\ny woman,_
39	*		that's \touched.\
40	*		/(∂:)/ as a relationship is be\ginning,_
41	*		<X and tha=% X>,_
42	*		a\gain,\
43	*		I think it's just human \nature.\
44	GY:		/Mhm,/
45	MR:		(H) So that that% (.) 'cord was struck and she (.) \acted on that.\
46	GY:		If you % <% i-i-if you %> (.) \had to characterize her,\
47	*		just with <MRC \one MRC> (..) thing.\
48	*		\what would you emphasize about her.\
49	MR: (1s)		Y' mean <A t[o pick a- A]>--
50	GY:		[What \fea]ture.\
51	MR:		pick an \a=djective,\
52	*		to de[\scribe] her,\
53	GY:		[<HI /Mhm,/ HI>]
54	*		/Mhm,/
55	*	(1s)	Or a \noun.\
56	*	(.)	Bu- (.) <P just P> one \one thing.\
57	*		So what was the --
58	*	(...)	or \well.\
59	*	(.)	\This is unfair.\
60	*	(.)	Well let's= let's= = let's choose \three things.\
61	MR: (...)		% To describe the 'essence of /Fra[nces]ca,/
62	GY:		[\Right.\]
63	*		\Right.\
64	MR: (1s)		tsk (1s) <Q<LO The essence of Fran\cesca.\ LO>Q>
65	*	(1s)	<L I /think Francesca=,_ L>
66	*	(1s)	<L /knows herself,_ L>
67	*		well e\nough.\
68	*	(2s)	She's- she's 'carefully <L intro\spective.\ L>
69	*	(.)	<L She= (1s) \weighs.\ L>
70	*		<L and \analyzes.\ L>
71	*		She's 'careful \that way.\
72	*		She's <MRC not MRC> im\petuous.\
73	GY:		/Mh[m,/]
74	MR:		[\No]=t impetuous at all.\
75	GY: (...)		/Mhm,/
76	*	(1s)	So d-do-does that \mean.\
77	*		<Q<LO _that she's able to analy=ze and introspect,_ LO>Q>
78	*		that she's in/telligent,/
79	MR:		<F \Yes.\ F>
80	*	(..)	\Yes.\
81	GY:		/M[hm,/]
→ **82**	**MR:**		**[She]'s a- \this is an intelligent woman.**
83	GY:		/Mhm,_
84	MR:		<Q<LO _An intelligent woman,_ LO>Q>
85	*		'who= (..) a= --
86	*		\knows her limitations,\

As will be seen from the following discussion, the referential options speakers choose throughout the excerpt are influenced by their thematic considerations and interactional goals.

4.1 Utterances 1-17

Fox (1987) points out the lack of a single rule of reference that could account for all the patterns found in English discourse. Generally, the first mention of a referent is done by a nominal expression, i.e., a full noun phrase, which is followed by mentions done by personal pronouns as long as the pronouns can uniquely identify the intended referent. It is also made clear in Fox (1987) that speakers also create structural hierarchies by the device of anaphora. Besides uniquely identifying the referent, the anaphoric personal pronoun seems also to be part of a strategy of sending the message that a particular theme is still øopenø Accordingly, occurrence of a reference by a full noun phrase closes the current theme down, and, at the same time, opens a new theme ô with the previous or a new referent as protagonist in it.

In light of the above, our sample can be seen as split into two thematic parts. A male referent is the topic of the first part (1-17). He is established thematically in previous discourse not transcribed and analyzed here. Subsequent references are naturally made to him by anaphoric *he*, which is the unmarked device to mark thematically open utterances.

Apart from thematic coherence, utterances 7-17 are also symptomatic of the overall tone of the interview, in general, and the speakers' attitude toward each other, in particular. Joint laughter in 7-16 usually creates alignment between speakers by confirming their common grounds. (But see, e.g., situations of trouble talk, where the trouble teller's laughter is not expected to be returned.) MR initiates laughter as a response to GY's question, which, based on the recollections of the writer of this paper, meant to elicit precisely that by being produced on a provocatively soft and low voice (and accompanied by a certain facial expression). GY's interactional goal is also clear from the fact that she maintains the ølaughing modeø by reinitiating laughter in 12, re-eliciting it with a øsmileyø backchannel and "a postutterance laugh particle" (Jefferson, 1979), then picking up on MR's laughter again.

4.2 Utterances 18-44

There occurs a seemingly abrupt thematic shift in 18 by the other main character's appearance centerstage, which triggers occurrence of reference by a full noun phrase, as predicted from what is said above. But the transition between the two thematic segments is actually smooth ô due to two facts. First, the question in 18 ties in to the previous theme by drawing a thematic parallel. The utterance in 18 can be anticipated from 1-17, where the topic is the male protagonist set up as a masculine type. Thus it is a logical continuation to examine the female protagonist, Francesca, from the corresponding perspective of femininity. Second, the question is prefaced by discourse marker *and*. Schiffrin defines discourse markers as "sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk" (1987, p.31). "Sometimes those units are sentences, but sometimes they are propositions, speech acts, tone units" (1987, p.35). Discourse markers are not coherent on a local level, rather they are devices that work on the level of the interaction as a whole. In utterance 18, the

marker *and* functions simultaneously to coordinate the idea units concerning Kincaid's masculinity and Francesca's femininity, and to continue the speaker's action. And as such, it is a natural transition between two parallel topics, and also a powerful device to reinforce GYøs global control over the interaction. Also, 17 as a backchannel, can be seen as preparing the ground for a next utterance.

Backchannel is the most frequent type of utterance on GY's part. When it overlaps with MR's talk, it seems to be used to acknowledge her contributions and encourage her to continue. When it does not overlap, it still acknowledges her talk and, at the same time, makes relevant a next move that follows from the logic of interaction. Since this is an interview, this type of backchannel makes a next question relevant. However, the most typical function of backchannel, whether or not overlapping, seems to confirm GY in the role of talk recipient. (It is intuitively plausible that this kind of backchannel is allowed in informal discourse such as talk shows and interviews in relaxed settings but disallowed in more formal settings, e.g., court hearings.)

Question 18 is followed by MR's answer in 19-42, with references made to Francesca by anaphoric *her*, which is the default device for reference continuity. Utterance 43 can be considered to be a formulaic bottom-line, which, at the end of an explanation, is used to place the explainable in a broader perspective, thereby to elegantly close down the topic. And MR's achievement is so acknowledged by GY's backchannel in 44.

4.3 Utterances 45-60

The theme, though felicitously closed in 43, is re-opened in 45, where MR continues her answer to the question asked in 18. Re-opening a thematically closed utterance with a seemingly inappropriate use of the anaphoric pronoun is explained in Fox (1987). By re-introduction of pronominal reference after the closed theme, MR guides GY to one or more thematically relevant previous utterances that she wants 45 to be tied to. The new utterance produced is also a kind of summary in terms of cause and effect, which, again, is a plausible candidate for a topic-closing utterance. The fact that GY interprets *she* in 45 merely as a return pop, hence the whole utterance as pertinent to the previous theme, seems to be supported by her refrainment from producing a backchannel this time. The backchannel given in 44 is sufficient to make a next question by GY relevant.

GY's new question in 46-48 is a borderline case with respect to reference formulation. The question introduces a new theme about the main female character, which might be regarded as a locally initial context, i.e., the right locus for occurrence of a proper name. At the same time, the question refers to the same character, thus the fact of continuous reference would run counter to occurrence of a proper name. By pronominal reference, GY chooses to comply with the latter condition. This is in keeping with Downing (1996), who concludes that bare proper names as opposed to other definite referring expressions are the best option when the referent needs to be reinstated in its previous thematic status. Pronominal reference, then, is to display that the referent's status has not changed.

GY's new question in 46-48, however, is marked problematic first by a one-second pause before MR's response, and second, by her answer beginning by *y'mean*, which functions to redirect GY's attention to her words just uttered, in order to locate a possible

repairable. Utterances 49, 51 and 52, however, do more than redirecting GY's attention to her previous utterance. MR is ready to co-operate in the process of repair by offering an interpretation for GY's question. Partly overlapped with MR's first repairing utterance come GY's repeat question in 50, and agreement to, elaboration and interpretation of, MR's repair, in 53, 54, 55 and 56.

However, 56 is now identified as a repairable by GY herself. The attempt to reformulate her question in 57 ó in answer to MR's request for repair of 49, 50 and 52 ó ends up being a self-interruption. After assessing her previous proposal in 58-59, she repairs it in 60. Both the assessment and the repair utterances are prefaced by discourse marker *well*, a typical device in utterances meant to repair the content of talk (Schiffrin 1987).

The mode of reference in GY's mentions of the female character of 46-60 continues to be anaphoric *she* since Francesca remains the protagonist all along and will keep that status up to the end of the excerpt.

4.4 Utterances 61-75

Why does, then, MR refer to Francesca by a proper name in 61, 64 and 65? The first two occurrences of the name *Francesca* seem to perform similar interactional goals. Its occurrence in 61 lends itself to two alternative analyses. It might be attributed to the fact that the present mention and the last mention of the referent are six utterances apart. And since the six utterances in between are devoted to GY's self-negotiation of 46, 47 and 48, utterance 61 could be an instance of the referent being reinstated in its previous thematic status. However, an alternative explanation seems equally plausible. After two rounds of joint negotiation of GY's meaning, utterance 61 leads back to GY's original question of 46, 47 and 48, with respect to which it is yet another offer of repair. On the other hand, it is highly unlikely that MR, who volunteers an interpretation of the same question as early as in 49, 51, 52, is still unclear on GY's meaning in 61. In this light, MRøs aim in 61 can be inferred as different from a simple offer of repair. The pause preceding her contribution as well as the content itself reveals her real goal: to gain some time to think of an appropriate answer. While it might function as a space holder, the proper name reference helps MR mask her utterance as an offer of repair. In this sense, re-establishing the referent in the universe of discourse by a proper name, might reflect MR's attempt at gaining control over information about the referent (see Fox 1987, Downing 1996). Her mode of reference typical of locally initial utterances serves, so to speak, to cancel the previous negotiation for meaning in 49-60, and thereby to make this new ørepairing sequenceørelevant.

Following due confirmation in 62 and 63 by GY, and a two-second pause, MR produces a partial echo of her question of 61, in the declarative so as to suggest she is thinking aloud. Therefore, the ødeclarative modeø in 64 sets up the referent in a new light and, again, attempts to cancel her previous status. Francesca is now the theme of MR's reflection, rather than that of her request for confirmation. Besides, the proper name reference appears to be another effective time-gaining device in two respects. First, through producing an echo, MR creates the impression of successfully accomplishing a turn. Second, her echo-question allows her to speak topically while the topic gets, in actual fact, suspended.

The third occurrence of the proper name in 65, after a one-second pause, is now in a statement, the beginning of MR's answer. It is a new move which continues through 75, and subsequent references are made by anaphoric *she*. In retrospect, it is evident that 65, rather

than being a space holder, is the first of a series of assessments. The nominal reference in it has the function of creating the referent as a new discourse entity and thereby demarcating the interactional goal intended in 65 from those intended in 61 and 64. While utterance 65 is, first of all, the beginning of an answer to GY's question, 61 is a request for repair, which is partly repeated in 61, both being time-gaining devices. Further, while 65 advances the topic, the main function of 61 and 64 is to suspend it. However, the three utterances seem to share a property: each time the referent is mentioned as *Francesca*, in 61, 64, and 65, it gets instated in a new status.

4.5 Utterances 76-86

After MR's assessment sequences, followed by GY's acknowledgement backchannel of 75, GY asks her last question in the excerpt, making pronominal reference to the female protagonist. The pronominal reference is used as a device for GY to tie her question in 76-78 to MR's contribution in 65-75. Pronominal *she* adds to formulating GY's question as a summary and conclusion of MR's previous assessment. It is this suggestion of GY's in response to which MR eventually produces utterance 82, the main concern of the present paper. The utterance at issue, however, does not immediately follow GY's question. It is first preceded, in 79, by a short and enthusiastic, intonationally prominent agreement with GY's proposition. The agreement token is reiterated in 80, this time in a more attenuated form and produced after a short pause. It is only after the two general agreement tokens that, partly overlapping with GY's acknowledgement backchannel, the utterance is made in 82. The three answers ó 79, 80 and 82 ó to the same question might be regarded as representatives of three psychological states. While 79 is a spontaneous reaction, an intuitive recognition of truth, 80 is a product of reasoning, accepting truth as a result of analysis. Finally, 82 is a display of the truth achieved as a lived-through experience of the present moment.

MR's utterance is acknowledged by GY's backchannel in 83, which is followed by the last three utterances of the transcript: partial reiteration and further specification of MR's assessment.

5 Utterance 82: *She's a- this is an intelligent woman*

In what follows, a detailed analysis of the syntactic, semantic and interactional parameters of utterance 82 is in order.

5.1 Syntactic analysis of sentence 82': This is an intelligent woman

Syntactically, 82' is a non-elliptical simple declarative sentence. It is made up from a subject noun phrase, which is the proximal demonstrative pronoun and a predicate verb phrase. The verb phrase consists of the copular *be* and a noun phrase, which is the combination of the indefinite article *a(n)*, a qualifying adjective and a noun. The element *be* can be classed as a verb because it realizes concord and tense as other lexical verbs do.

According to Greenbaum and Quirk (1990), the predicate in 82' could be analyzed into a copular verb, which is an operator, and a subject complement, which is an obligatory sentence element. The complement is ascriptive, rather than equative, which has two consequences: the subject and the complement are not readily permutable (**An intelligent woman is this*, and the complement cannot be a proper name. (Rather than ascriptive, *This is*

Peter is an equative sentence used in situations of introduction and self-identification.) The ascriptive structure serves to ascribe the property of 'being an intelligent woman' to the subject referent.

Noonan (1990) would, by contrast, identify 82' as a predication containing a subject argument, *this*, and a non-verbal predicator, in particular, a predicate nominal *an intelligent woman*, as well as a copular verb. It must be noted that 82' might be considered ill-formed from a purely prescriptive point of view. The subject is a demonstrative pronoun referring to a human, which is to be avoided according to *Collins Cobuild English Usage* (1992, p.716): "You do not use *this* as a pronoun to refer to a person who has just been mentioned. Instead you use *he* or *she* (*He was known to all as Eddie.*)." So the potential recipient of 82' is not supposed to interpret *this* as an anaphoric device referring to a human being talked about.

CCEU (1992, p.716) also warns against another possible use of *this*: "*This* is not usually used as a pronoun to refer to a person. You only use it when you are identifying someone or asking them about their identity. For example, you use *this* when you are introducing someone [...] You also use *this* to say who you are when you phone someone." Introductions or self-identifications, however, normally require at least one definite expression in their predicate. (Introduction face-to-face: *This is my friend / Peter.* Self-identification on the phone: *This is a friend of Peter's.*) So the recipient of 82' is, again, advised against considering *this* to be a situational deictic expression referring to a human who is to be identified and established in the universe of discourse. And yet, the meaning of the subject complement/predicate nominal *an intelligent woman* makes it straightforward that *this* has a human referent. Further, in *CCEU*, mention is only made of the use of the demonstrative adjective/determiner as an anaphoric device to introduce a new nonhuman referent into the universe of discourse. (*At school we had to wear these awful white cotton hats.*) In the above function, however, the demonstrative is a determiner/adjective, rather than a pronoun, and it being the colloquial equivalent of the indefinite article, it has indefinite, rather than definite reference.

It follows from what has been said so far that if the demonstrative in 82' is meant to be anaphoric, then, from a strictly prescriptive point of view, the utterance is of marginal acceptability for it is an ascriptive proposition containing demonstrative *this* in subject position denoting a human referent.

5.2 Semantic analysis of sentence 82 ': This is an intelligent woman

5.2.1 Analysis of the predicate: an intelligent woman

In the light of the above syntactic analysis, 82' could be øcorrectedø in two ways: by preserving the demonstrative in subject position, or by preserving the non-verbal predicator, which will be an adjective. The first adjustment would yield 82'i:

82'i   *This woman is intelligent.*

The second adjustment would result in (82'ii):

82'ii   *She/Francesca is an intelligent woman.*

Based on findings in Wierzbicka (1986), the nominal complement in 82'ii provides a more powerful characterization of the subject than the adjectival complement in 82'i. The adjective *intelligent* in 82'i, in keeping with the prototypical adjective function, ascribes one

single property to the subject. By contrast, *an intelligent woman* in 82'ii predicates about the referent that she is a woman, first of all, by means of a noun evoking a "multidimensional image" (Wierzbicka, 1986, p.373). The adjective, a semantically subordinate element, might be interpreted as merely adding one more feature to the complexity of *woman*. Naturally, the referent's gender might be known otherwise, without the fact being predicated. It should be noted, however, that information status, though a recipient-oriented feature of discourse referents, depends on speaker's choice. Consequently, if the speaker decides to present information already shared with the recipient, they will do so with a reason other than smooth flow of information. It might be suggested that the speaker by saying (82'ii) means to present the referent as being endowed with certain properties encapsulated in her womanhood, and, against that backdrop, to characterize her with one additional property, i.e., being intelligent.

5.2.2 Analysis of the subject: *this*

In an effort to discover universally attested discourse functions of demonstratives, Himmelmann (1996) sets up two supercategories. Situational-deictic and discourse-deictic uses belong to the first supercategory. In both cases a referent is established in the universe of discourse for the first time. Situational use involves pointing to a concrete entity in the physical (*in this room*) or in a metaphorical space (*in this article*). By contrast, discourse-deictic use involves pointing to a proposition or event in previous discourse (*and that's the end of that story*).

Himmelmann points out that a range of situational uses is where the demonstrative refers to an entity in a narrated situation, rather than the actual utterance situation (*And he's heading ... you see a scene where he's ... coming on his bicycle this way*), where the speaker's perspective is shifted, and the demonstrative points to a situation in the narrated event. The most common of these uses is indirect speech and which Himmelmann calls Deixis am Phantasma, after Bühler (1934). An extreme case of Deixis am Phantasma is when the whole utterance situation is shifted to the narrated situation and it is pretended that the narrated event is actually happening right in front of the narrator and audience.

A special instance of Deixis am Phantasma, which is a recent phenomenon in colloquial English, is the so-called "new-*this*". People sometimes use the unstressed proximal demonstrative instead of the indefinite article *a(n)* in the sense of something/someone to be introduced into the universe of discourse (*We met this wonderful man when we were in Bristol. He took us to this fantastic restaurant in this funny old house...*). In the example, *this* is always indefinite, is sufficient to firmly establish a discourse referent in the universe of discourse, which it shares with proper situational uses. At the same time, it is distinct from the latter in that the referent is not present in the utterance situation and thus cannot literally be pointed to.

In Himmelmann's classification of demonstratives, the second supercategory contains tracking use and recognitional use. Both uses involve reference to entities already established in the universe of discourse. In tracking use, it is assumed that more than one reference has been made during the preceding interaction and the demonstrative serves to help the recipient in keeping track of what is happening to whom or what. This use of demonstratives is also called anaphoric or coreferential. It is argued that demonstratives are used for tracking only if other tracking devices fail. Tracking use involves contrast to

another, similar referent or a shift in focus of attention. In similar vein, Isard (1975) shows the way demonstrative *that*, as opposed to pronominal *it*, makes an inferrable referent salient. In Ariel's (1998, p.211) formulation, the demonstrative "retrieves the less accessible antecedent among those antecedents which are relatively accessible".

Recognitional use involves reference to entities assumed by the speaker to be established in the universe of discourse and serves to signal that the speaker is referring to specific, but presumably shared, knowledge. So the problem here consists in the assessment of the recipientøs knowledge, i.e., whether the recipient is in fact aware of the existence of the intended referent in the universe of discourse. It invites the recipient to signal the need for further clarification regarding the intended referent or to acknowledge that they, in fact, know what the speaker is talking about. A typical example of recognitional use is *...it was filmed in California, those dusty kind of hills that they have out here by Stockton and all...* Himmelmann adds to this use that it often involves referents of only peripheral importance, i.e., it tends to be a non-tracking mention. Also, there is a tendency to incorporate additional anchoring or descriptive information into a recognitional mention to make the intended referent more accessible. Thus, recognitional use often involves relative clauses or other modifiers of similar complexity.

The functions characterized in Himmelmann are claimed to be universal, which has the following natural implications. First, there might exist more specific discourse functions based on the two general supercategories with different distribution in different languages. Second, either or both of the two main functions, are, in fact, inherent in every single instance of demonstrative.

Ariel (1998) comes to a similar conclusion claiming that all definite referring expressions can retrieve entities from all three cognitive domains of givenness (see **3**). This means for demonstratives, that they can refer to entities given in speakers' shared background knowledge (knowledge givenness; see Himmelmann's recognitional or tracking uses), to entities given in speakers' physical environment (physical givenness; see Himmelmann's situational use), to entities given in speakers' discourse interaction (discourse givenness; cf. Himmelmann's discourse-deictic or tracking uses). Further, they are characterized as intermediate-accessibility markers, i.e., they tend to select referents that are less accessible than those marked by noun phrases but more accessible than those marked by personal pronouns.

Interestingly enough, the different uses of demonstratives can be shown to have gestural equivalents in sign language. McNeill (1992) characterizes space as of changing semiotic value. The same physical space can be, at different points during narration, occupied by the characters from a televised story, by a television screen and a viewer, or by the actual narrator and their listener. McNeill describes a narrative excerpt where some deictic gestures indicate the location of a character in a story ó at the narrative level proper. Other deictic gestures occur at the metanarrative level, indicating in space the position of a new scene, and yet other deictic gestures refer back to the narrative level, and the position of new characters.

Although the issue is not explicitly addressed in the present paper, it might be worth obtaining a general idea of the problem of the use of demonstratives in terms of semantic markedness. Lyons (1977, Vol. 2, p.677) briefly characterizing proximal *this* and non-proximal *that* from the point of view of markedness writes "... there is no doubt that the

speaker's subjective involvement and his appeal to shared experience are relevant factors in the selection of those demonstratives and adverbs which, in their normal deictic use, indicate proximity". The special use of *this* is termed empathetic deixis. Himmelmann (1996), by contrast, proposes that markedness is conditional upon specific use, and in this sense, the proximal demonstrative is unmarked for tracking use, whereas the non-proximal demonstrative is unmarked for recognitional use.

In Himmelmann's treatment of the functions of demonstratives, it is pointed out that the boundaries between the subcategories are blurred. This is in keeping with the finding that (82') does not completely fit any of Himmelmannøs universally attested categories**.** The proximal demonstrative in its function in (82') seems to borrow its properties partly from tracking use, and partly from situational use. *This* is definitely anaphoric in that it helps the recipient keep track of reference established before. However, the utterance does not display contrast to any other similar referents, or a shift in focus of attention to another entity, nor is it the case that other tracking devices should fail. (To be sure, *this* here does invoke a certain contrast which may not be explicit until utterance 82, but might be lurking in the background, i.e., øthis woman, as opposed to other feminine women, is not a giggly schoolgirl, but intelligentø However, rather than set up the referent as standing in contrast to some other referent(s) mentioned in the previous discorse, *this* is, in our case, allusive of the referent as compared to women outside the utterance or narrated situations.) At the same time, *this* seems to be situational, in particular, Deixis am Phantasma, referring to the narrated situation, rather than the speech situation. However, the referent is not established in the universe of discourse for the first time.

Obviously, as far as the use of *this* in (82') is concerned, there is no doubt that it is a component of an empathetic construction (cf. Lyons, 1977), which, first of all, displays the speaker's subjective involvement.

5.3 Interactional analysis of (82): She's a- this is an intelligent woman

The upshot of the discussion so far has been to show some of the possible ways (82') runs counter to syntactic and semantic predictions of prescriptive grammar. In addition, it turns out that the entire utterance (82) is the result of øcorrectionø The utterance in its immediately relevant context is repeated below for the sake of convenience:

```
     76  GY: (1s)      So d-do-does that \mean.\
     77  *             <Q<LO _that she's able to analy=ze and introspect,_ LO>Q>
     78  *             that she's in/telligent,/
     79  MR:           <F \Yes.\ F>
     80  *     (..)    \Yes.\
     81  GY:           /M[hm,/]
→    82  MR:              [She]'s a- \this is an intelligent woman.\
     83  GY:           /Mhm,_
     84  MR:           <Q<LO _An intelligent woman,_ LO>Q>
     85  *             'who= (..) a= --
     86  *             \knows her limitations,\
```

The speaker, MR starts formulating the utterance *She's an intelligent woman*, stops short, restarts immediately and produces *This is an intelligent woman.* Further, the resulting

utterance is of the same stress pattern and pitch direction. S*he/this* is unstressed or secondarily stressed, the tone unit *an intelligent woman* has falling pitch, and *intelligent* gets heavier stress than *woman*. It seems, then, that the reason for øcorrectionø lies in considerations other than phonetic.

Why should an English native speaker of MR's educational and social background change in an interview a grammatical sentence to one øof marginal acceptabilityø? The only plausible answer is that, by formulating 82 the way it is, the speaker accomplishes a complex interactional goal.

MR's answer to GY's question is coherent in two ways. First, 82 is a locally coherent second part of a question-answer adjacency pair. Second, it is a contribution topically tied to previous discourse. The first attempt at reference formulation, pronominal *she*, used also in GY's question and now repeated in MR's answer, usually serves the purpose of thematic continuity. But the general agreement token in 79 and 80 turns out to perform the same function of thematic continuity and local coherence. Despite the redundancy, 82 differs from 79 and 80 in a significant way. Utterance 82 reiterates GY's proposition, rather than just agree with it in general terms, which shows that 82 is really produced for the sake of its specific formulation. (Let us here disregard the option of also viewing the three expressions of agreement in light of speakers' general preference for sets of three items.)

MR reiterates GY's suggestion *She's intelligent*, which results in the utterance *This is an intelligent woman*. Although 82' is not exact lexical repetition, any degree of lexical repetition ó literal or otherwise ó is shown to help speakers disambiguate the reference to be made in case of so-called same-gender environment, i.e., with more than one candidate for anaphoric reference. Under such circumstances, repetition guides the recipient to a thematically relevant previous utterance that the speaker wants their intended referent to be tied to (see Fox, 1987).

In lack of referential ambiguity, the case of lexical repetition in 82 is to be judged from a different perspective. The repetition of the key element as well as the ascriptive predicative structure of GY's utterance displays MR's contribution as a commitment to the truth of 82, rather than a simple agreement to it. (Interestingly, the distribution pattern of expressions of agreement seems to be generally indicative of the extent of speakers' expected commitment to the subject matter of their own agreement. For instance, in wedding or inauguration ceremonies, where participants are supposed to wholeheartedly commit themselves to the practical and spiritual dimensions of their øagreementø, a simple y*es* would be highly inadequate. Instead, the participants are required to perform the act of committing themselves by pronouncing certain words. Similarly, in everyday situations, participants often take each other's word for a particular move in the future etc., which literally means that the person concerned must seal a pact with particular words.) When, after having already said *yes* twice, MR pronounces the words *This is an intelligent woman*, she can hardly mean a simple agreement with GY's proposition. The words are rather spoken to convey an opinion of her own now. In the process of producing the three positive responses to GY's suggestion, MR's simple initial agreement gradually develops through a conviction into a real commitment. As opposed to a simple *yes*, 82 constructs MR's words as an opinion emerged from consciousness.

The discussion above, however, raises the following question: Why does MR not produce 82 in the form *Francesca is an intelligent woman* instead, which would combine the virtues of a powerful expression of a predicate (see 5.2.1) and a grammatically well-

formed expression of a subject? And in that form, the utterance would still qualify as an autonomous opinion. According to the insights in Fox (1987) and Downing (1996), occurrence of a proper name instead of a pronoun which is unpredictable on the grounds of accessibility or thematic relevance structure can be symptomatic of the speaker's general stance to the recipient. It is shown that insistence on a proper name might reflect the speaker's reluctance to tie their utterance to the recipient's previous utterance. The proper name might be interpreted as an attempt at control over information. Fox discusses disagreement utterances where the speaker in disagreement with the content of the previous speaker's utterance makes reference through a proper name to the entity of the previous utterance identified by the same proper name. Downing, in this connection, shows the way proper names can set up speakers as knowledgeable participants. By using a proper name, the speaker can claim a relatively higher degree of familiarity with the referent than the recipient can. In other words, proper names can mark referents as belonging to the speaker's territory-of-information. Consequently, proper names, instead of pronominal forms, can display speakers' ownership of some information, which, in turn, might be used to display superiority with respect to other participants in the ongoing interaction. In this light, proper name *Francesca* would not be a successful candidate, for, obviously, it is not MR's goal to outshine GY through coming to an unappealable conclusion about the mental faculties of the referent. After all, MR accepts GY's suggestion. When, through the act of speaking those words, she formulates her opinion and commits herself to it, she does not do so against GY's opinion. Rather, she does so irrespective of GY's opinion. To be sure, it is GY who suggests the words, however, she has no role whatsoever in whether or not MR recognizes the truth of those words, and if so, in the way MR formulates her own opinion.

It has been argued above that the structure combined with the role of lexical elements in *This is an intelligent woman* identifies 82 as an autonomous opinion stemming from the speaker's consciousness. It is argued here that demonstrative *this*, instead of *she* or *Francesca*, in subject position seems to add an important element to the interpretation of the utterance. Utterance 82, formulated as a repair sequence, so to speak, ødocumentsø the last stage in the development of MR's idea of the referent. As Jefferson (1974) points out, repairing sequences do not cancel the validity of repaired sequences. In case of 82, personal pronoun *she* in MR's false start reflects a routine choice to formulate an unmarked reference according to the expected thematic and referential norms. The form selected initially by MR echoes GY's formulation of the referent of 77-78. The break-off of the utterance and the immediate repair of *she* to demonstrative *this* captures the brief event of MR's finding the optimal device to display the relevance that the referent has for her at that point of the interaction. At the moment of the formulation of the utterance, MR searches for a referent that can be the appropriate focus of her assessment as the outcome of an experience øhere and nowø It seems plausible that *this* is selected by virtue of its intrinsic deictic nature, in particular, its sense of proximity, hence its potential association with consciousness and personal involvement. By locating the referent in the physical speech situation, the verbal pointing gesture endows it with the property of closeness, which contributes the element of øhere and nowøto the speaker's intellectual achievement.

Nonetheless, as will be seen in the following, the proximal demonstrative is not an obligatory component of assessments. Labov (1972), Polanyi (1985), Hunt and Vipond (1986) emphasize that anything which is not normally expectable, i.e., anything that violates the norm at any level of linguistic structure is potentially evaluative. In particular, Fox (1987) and Downing (1996) make mention of cases of semantically or thematically unexpected proper names instead of expected pronominal forms when speakers compete for

ownership of information. Duranti (1984) points out in Italian conversational data the way personal and demonstrative pronouns used to refer to humans are in complementary distribution. While personal pronouns are identified as serving to define thematically important referents and/or to show empathy and affect for them, demonstratives are claimed to refer to persons that are not nameworthy or are associated with negative affect or dislike on the speaker's part. Clancy (1980) suggests that pronominalizing or ellipting the referent in a thematically unmarked English utterance is mostly a case when the speaker takes the viewpoint of the referent and aligns themself with the recipient. However, pronominalization or ellipsis implies empathy only in cases of protagonists or thematically important referents. As it turns out, not only definite referring expressions can be in ¢interactional distribution¿. Ushie (1986) discussing coreferentiality relations in English written narratives takes texts as reflecting their producers' attitudes towards the content represented in the texts. She examines cases of referents identified by a definite full noun phrase the first time, and referred to by an indefinite full noun phrase at a later time. She argues that coreferential use of indefinite expressions may result from two facts. First, the indefinite expression conveys some information interpreted, rather than merely presented by the writer. Second, the indefinite expression signals a shift in the writer's point of view, i.e., in the perspective from which an entity or event is represented. When the speaker/writer uses an indefinite expression as an anaphoric device, it will not reflect the speaker's/writer's own view, rather it will present the referent from the perspective of another character found in the text.

In the interview, MR herself produces several assessment sequences without a demonstrative. However, it seems that while, e.g., the utterance *She's- she's carefully introspective* (68) is a simple statement of opinion, *She's- this is an intelligent woman* seems to be a bottom-line assessment emerging from the speaker¢s consciousness as an act of commitment. The fact that speakers can display commitment through the formula *This is a(n)...* might make assessments so patterned effective devices even in formal discourse. Occurrences of the pattern in official recommendation letters in the form *This is a man who...* or *This is a woman not only... but a woman...* set up the writers of the letters as persons conscious of and/or committed to their words.

6 Summary and pedagogical implications

In the utterance *This is an intelligent woman*, the occurrence of pronominal *this* in subject position, referring to a human in the ascriptive structure This is a(n) + Adj + N is found justifiable on interactional grounds. Speculations on thematic relevance and situational groundedness lead to the conclusion that the utterance operates on multiple linguistic levels. On syntactic level, the reference made by demonstrative *this*, rather than pronominal *she* or proper name *Francesca* can be viewed as an instance of incongruity between reference formulation and the local syntactic norm of the discourse. On semantic level, the syntactically ¢ill-formed¿ reference combined with the lexical meaning of the other components provides a clue to the function of the utterance as an assessment. On interactional level, the assessment of the referent is displayed as the speaker¢s personal commitment ó due to the context of ¢here and now¿ created by the intrinsically deictic reference form of the subject.

As a consequence, the question asked at the end of the Introduction section of the paper can now be answered. *This* is the preferred reference form in 82 due to its deictic

nature, which ó through its immediacy ó adds an element of consciousness/commitment to the assessment expressed in the utterance. Viewed in a still broader context, the feature common to utterances of introduction, self-identification and assessment, all containing the sequence *this is*, could be located in the concept of identification. In all three cases, identity is created between deictic *this* and a description (a proper name or otherwise). In assessments, moreover, identity extends to another domain: the relationship between the speaker and their own words of assessment.

Hopefully, this study has provided some useful ideas for pedagogical applications by going some way toward explaining the complex nature of referring expressions. If the explanation has merit, it might suggest that teaching the use of them is not such a straightforward matter as teaching, for example the rules for the formation of the passive. Although experience tells us that the rules or principles governing the usage of referring expressions are still not fully known even by those engaged in discourse analysis, focussing on this single feature has little pedagogical relevance in itself. On the other hand, it does seem possible to construct exercises for advanced learners of English that could be used in making them aware of this particular discourse feature of English. It looks, then, as if it was time to carry out a comprehensive survey of the principles governing the use of referring expressions, preferably in a cross-linguistic perspective, and incorporate exercises based on such investigations into coursebooks for advanced students. The present paper has made a step in that direction.

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APPENDIX A

Transcription symbols

/xxx	rising tone contour
\xxx	falling tone contour
xxx,	continuing intonation contour
xxx.	final intonation contour
<P P>	soft (piano)
<@ @>	laughing
H	inhalation
H(x)	exhalation
xxx=	lengthening
[ ]	speech overlap
%	glottal stop
<SML SML>	smiling
-	truncated word
<A A>	rapid (allegro)
(.)	short pause
(..) (í)	longer pause
(n sec)	long pause
xxx	level pitch movement
øxxx	secondary accent
<X X>	uncertain hearing
<MRC MRC>	emphasized (marcato)
--	truncated intonation unit
tsk	click of the tongue
<Q Q>	quotation quality
<L L>	slow (lento)