Information-packaging effects of attention focus in Vera’a narrative discourse

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Workshop *Discourse functions of demonstratives*
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Language of Vera’a

○ Oceanic language of North Vanuatu

○ 500+ speakers
Overview

- Paradigm of demonstratives in Vera’a
- Exophoric contexts of use
- Discourse-deictic use
- Information status and information-packaging effects
- Role of demonstratives in clause combining
- Discussion and conclusion
Paradigm of demonstratives
Paradigm of demonstratives

- basically 3-term system
  - basic forms person-based: speaker – addressee – outsider
  - plain versus prefixed forms
  - derived manner, temporal, locative forms
  - combinations with geocentric deictic terms, -> not dealt with here

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<th>SPKR</th>
<th>ADDR</th>
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<td>$agēn(ē)$</td>
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<td>TEMPORAL</td>
<td>va’agēn</td>
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<td>va’anē</td>
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<td>LOCATIVE</td>
<td>('e)kēgēn</td>
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<td>('e)kēnē</td>
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Proportions and distributions of demonstrative forms

- clear skewing in proportions and distributions
  - ADDR forms by far most frequent
  - pronominal use extremely restricted

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<td>ADN</td>
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<td>PRO</td>
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<td>OTHER</td>
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amongst a total of 2863 ‘lexical’ noun phrases
Vera’a corpus data

- primary corpus:
  - sub-corpus of 11 narrative texts, 3789 clauses, 20,851 words
  - further 65 narratives

- additionally:
  - video recordings of activities in community,
  - in particular building of a house (4.5 hrs)

- narrative text data available as part of Multi-CAST ([https://lac.uni-koeln.de/multicast/](https://lac.uni-koeln.de/multicast/)) ([http://bamling-research.de/multicast/](http://bamling-research.de/multicast/) for now)

Haig & Schnell (2018[2015])
Exophoric contexts of use
Exophoric contexts of use

- **SPKR-forms:**
  - only speaker aware of object / location
  - object / location physically close to speaker
  - draws addressee’s attention to object / location

(1) *woqe'enge agēnē 'erē mom kal 'i [...]*
   wood DEM.SPKR.A PL put up DEL
   ‘This wood here [in speakers hand], put (it) up, I have just cut (it).’
   HouseBuilding10_FQ.005

(2) *n gasel luwo mu-m gēn*
   ART knife big POSS.GEN-2SG DEM.SPKR
   ‘Your bush knife is here [where I am]!’
   observed
Exophoric contexts of use

- ADDR-forms:
  - speaker assumes addressee also aware of object / location
  - object / location not exclusively near speaker
  - addressee’s attention focus to be maintained on object / location

(3)  o  kēnē  nē  ga  tēlēglēg
      INTERJ   LOC.DEM.ADDR   DEM.ADDR HAB   askew

   “’No, there, that one is (still) uneven [not horizontal].’”

(4)  [...]  le  rieg  ēn  ūnara  gasel  anē  [...] 
      take out  ART  mouth  knife  DEM.ADDR.A

   “’Remove that (blade of that) knife!’”

**HouseBuilding04_PB.008**

**HouseBuilding09_JJ.009**
Exophoric contexts of use

OUT-forms:
- speaker assumes addressee also aware of object / location
- object / location physically remote from speaker and addressee, outside mutual interactional space
- addressee’s attention focus not to be maintained on object / location

(5) di ne 'i-'iris e raga a sag kēkē a =n wōlwōlo ē

“so that it will match those other ones (=the cross beams of the rafter) up there, on the cross.”

HouseBuilding08_JJ.002
Speaker and addressee in interaction

- use of SPKR and ADDR forms not determined by physical distance as such (cf Enfield 2003)

(6) near speaker, in attention focus of speaker plus addressee

\[
\text{ne} \text{n} \ wōqa’ag \ qi’i \ nē \ no =s ‘ar’ar \ anē
\]

DEM.ADDR =ART post head DEM.ADDR 1SG =SIM RED:carve DEM.ADDR.A

"'This is the head post, you know, what I am cutting.'" HouseBuilding08_JJ.003

(7) remote from both speaker and addressee

\[
mam \ ba \ =n \ bur \ aqēnē \ =n \ sava
\]

dad but =ART light DEM.SPKR.A =ART what

"'Dad, but this light here [pointing gesture, miles away], what is that?" ISWM.075-076"
Inclusion vs exclusion of addressee awareness

Is the addressee included?
- sharing same space
- sharing awareness of and attention to object / location

(8) reference to house everyone is aware of:

\[
\text{kamam} \, \text{ē} \quad \text{mi-mi'ir} \quad \text{ros} \quad a \quad \text{vie} \quad \text{kamam} \quad \text{mi'ir} \quad \text{wal} \quad \text{sa} \quad \text{kēnē}
\]

\[
1\text{PL.EX} \quad \text{NEG1} \quad \text{RED-sleep} \quad \text{NEG2} \quad \text{SP.LOC} \quad \text{where} \quad 1\text{PL.EX:PRF} \quad \text{sleep} \quad \text{INTENS} \quad \text{EMPH} \quad \text{DEM.ADDR.LOC}
\]

‘We didn’t sleep just anywhere (else), we slept right here!’

(9) reference to place in house where speaker and his brothers were hiding from addressee:

\[
\text{kamam} \quad \text{mi'ir} \quad \text{sa} \quad \text{gēnē} \quad \text{lē} \quad =n \quad \text{wio}
\]

\[
1\text{PL.EX:PRF} \quad \text{sleep} \quad \text{EMPH} \quad \text{DEM.SPKR} \quad \text{LOC} \quad =\text{ART} \quad \text{bamboo}
\]

“We slept right here, in the bambos [struts].”

- addressee-oriented form also the one for extended “here” reference
Discourse-deictic uses of demonstratives
Discourse-deictic use with established information

- **ADDR** forms used for anaphoric reference to previous discourse (content)

(10) \(nē\) =n tēktēk mu-n e Qo’

   DEM.ADDR =ART speech POSS.GEN-CS PERS Q.

   ‘[Qo’s speech] That was Qo’ talking there.’

   JJQ.308

(11) so \(nē’ē\) =n ni’i kaka wo =n nes [...]

   ?? DEM.ADDR =ART small story and =ART song

   ‘So this is a little story and song.’ [concluding the story]

   GATG.065
Discourse-deictic use with new information

- **SPKR** forms used for cataphoric reference to following discourse (content)
  - introduction of narratives, reference to narrative about to unfold

(12) $no\quad =k\quad kaka\quad =n\quad nel\tilde{n}\tilde{o}\quad vu’\quad ag\tilde{\text{e}}n\tilde{\text{e}}$

1SG =PROSP:1SG story =ART voice-spirit DEM.SPKR.A

“I am going to tell the following story:’

(13) $l\tilde{e}\quad =n\quad nes\quad ‘a\quad b\tilde{\text{e}}ne\quad di\quad =m\quad van\quad eseg\tilde{\text{e}}n$

LOC =ART song ASS.SP OBL.PRO 3SG =PRF go MAN.DEM.SPKR

‘The song belonging to it [i.e. the story] goes like this:’
Anaphoric and cataphoric use of manner demonstratives

- manner demonstratives ‘like this’ with ‘discourse-deictic reference’

  - how something is done / happens, as just described

(14) dir =ēm da senē vaga
  3PL =PRF do MAN.DEM.ADDR always

  ‘[description of fishing practices] They did (it) like this (as said before) all the time.’ ISAM.007

  - how something is done / happens, to be described in what follows

(15) di me van segēn
  3SG FUT go MAN.DEM.SPKR

  ‘It would work like this: [instruction how to install a trap].’ ISV.144
Information status and information-packaging effects
Adnominal SPKR form in endophoric use - rare

- nearly absent from the corpus, single example

(16) \(di\ \ ne\ \ van\ ma\ |\ ne\ \ rērē\ \ e\ \ ruwa\ \ agēn\ \ ō\ \ di\ \ rōs\)

3SG PROSP:3SG go hither PROSP:3SG head PERS HUM:DU DEM.SPKR.A INTERJ 3SG NEG2

‘Then she came over and took a closer look at two (guys) here, no, not him’

ISWM.326
Anaphoric uses of ADDR form

- ADDR forms used for established participants
  - do not mark just definiteness

(17) wo 'isimēre anē ne 'aN vē’ē =n dudu vada ne vōwal
and firstborn DEM.ADDR.A PROSP:3SG hand release =ART leaf pandanus NUM one

‘(The devil was then sucking in the sea again, and the sea current [that arose from that] brought the canoe [the two siblings are sitting in] ever closer to him.) So then the older sister letgo a pandanus leaf.’

2.PALA.091

(18) duru =k 'ēn ma =n lumgav ne vōwal | lumgav ne vōwal anē
di ne laa-laka senē | wo ___ ne virig ma [...]”

‘Then the two spotted a young man. And the young man, he danced, and then (he) came over, [and sat down under the wild kava plant.’

1.PALA.044-045
Anaphoric uses of ADDR form

- information-packaging effects
  - topic-like

(19) \( \text{oₜe } \text{mu-n } \text{e } \text{ni'į- } \text{reñe } \text{anē } \text{ne } \text{ma' } | \text{e } \text{duru } =k \text{ 'ēn (eh) } \text{mum } \text{POSS.GEN-CS PERS small- female DEM.ADDR.A PROSP:3SG dead } \text{DISC 3DU=PROSP:NSG see} \)
\( =n \text{'ama-gi ne 'ēn gōr ēn ni'į- } \text{reñe anē } \text{vaav-van} \)
\( =\text{ART father-3SG PROSP:3SG see secure ART small- female DEM.ADDR.A RED-go} \)
\( e =n \text{'ama-gi anē ne ma' } \)
\( \text{DISC =ART father-3SG DEM.ADDR.A PROSP:3SG dead} \)

'Then the mother of the little girl died. So her father looked after the little girl, on and on, and then her father died.' ANV.005-007
Anaphoric uses of ADDR form

- information-packaging effects
  - focus-like

(20) wēwē wova'al ne vōwal sarēnē ga mine ne'ē sa gidu me gen
fruit pawpaw NUM one up.there HAB ripe DEM.ADDR EMPH 1DL.IN FUT eat

‘Oh friend, there is one ripe pawpaw fruit up these. That one is the one we will eat, I tell you.’

GABG.051-052
Anaphoric uses of OUT form

- recognitional function
  - not topical in following proposition / discourse

(21) duru =k wos ēn ŋar wos ēn ŋar anē dir'ōl da =n wig
     3DL =PROSP:NSG hammer ART k.o.nut hammer ART k.o.nut DEM.ADDR.A 3TL do =ART k.o.pudding
     me big 'ō sa =n rōrō' ē
     FUT eat with EMPH =ART k.o.cabbage DEM.OUT

‘So they would smash up canarium nuts. Smash up canarium nuts to make wig pudding, which was to be had with that very cabbage (that they had gotten earlier on). (Alright, so they smashed canarium nuts and then started making wig).’

AS.1.028-030
Anaphoric uses of OUT form

- recognitional function
  - not topical

(22) ba di =m gis ēn menre- kōlōv- 'ar-'ara ē
    but 3SG =PRF grab ART piece chipping RED-chop DEM.OUT

ne mul 'ō ____ lē =n lōlō- imē
PROSP:3SG go carry LOC =ART inside- house

‘But he took a piece of that chipping, and took (it) home with himself.’ JJQ.052
Anaphoric uses of **OUT** form

- recognitional function
  - not topical
  - possible to re-establish as topic by subsequent use of **ADDR** form

(23) **ne** 'ēn *e ruwa m̄alm̄ala ē* =s *sag 'i e ruwa m̄alm̄ala anē* so

PROSP:3SG see PERS HUM:DL girl DEM.OUT =SIM sit DEL PERS HUM:DL girl DEM.ADDR.A QUOT

‘[...] and then (he) spotted those two girls (who were) sitting (there), and the two girls said: ...’

1.PALA.059-060
Role of demonstratives in clause combining
Clause combining with ADDR form

- ADDR form takes up an established state-of-affairs
  - presupposition for following proposition

(24) lē =n masōgi di =m sagsag anē di ne susur lik ēn aklē dudu woqe 'enge

‘And as he was sitting (up on top of the shore), he also assembled some leaves (to make some decoration for himself).’

(25) ba dir’ōl =s vanvan anē =n ‘isimēre mal lama’i so =n ‘ama’

‘But as the three were walking along, the younger sister had already realised that is was a devil.’
Clause combining with OUT form

- OUT form takes up an established state-of-affairs
  - dropped, put on hold for possible later reference

(26) e Qo' ne sag rēn sag kēkē ē
    PERS Q. PROSP:3SG sit stuck up above DEM.OUT

wo e raga 'i-'isi-gi anē van rōw lē =n vunuō
and PERS HUM:PL RED-YSS-3SG DEM.ADDR.A go seawards LOC =ART village

'So Qo' was now stuck up there (in the tree). Sat (there) while his brothers went down to the village. (They stole his wife and his canoe, and paddled off with it.)'
Discussion and conclusion
Meaning of demonstrative forms?

- attention-focus management as common semantic core (Diessel 2006)
  
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<tr>
<th>Orientation</th>
<th>Effect</th>
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<tr>
<td>speaker-oriented</td>
<td>you are not attending to this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>addressee-oriented</td>
<td>you are also attending to this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outsider-oriented</td>
<td>I am not attending to this</td>
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- all demonstratives mark referent as prominent (Himmelmann & Primus 2015)

- exact same meaning of demonstratives in endophoric contexts

- information-packaging is a set of *effects* (Matić & Wedgwood 2013; Ozerov 2015)
  - prominence-marking and attention management of demonstratives
  - other elements (e.g. emphatic marker *sa*) or structures (e.g. dislocation, prosodic structure)
Meaning of demonstrative forms?

- Vera’a person-based system similar to, yet different from those in Japanese or Turkish (Özürek & Kita (n.d.))
  - Japanese related to physical distance
  - Turkish attention-attracting şu not associated with speaker (opposition bu vs o)

- System similar to Vera’a described by Mosel (2004) for Samoan (Oceanic)

- Vera’a demonstratives more similar to ENGAGEMENT inflection in Andoke (Evans et al 2017) or sentence-final epistemic particles yo and ne in Japanese (Kamio 1997)
References


References


Thanks!