(Discourse) Deictic Usages of Demonstrative Pronoun *that*: A Cognitive Linguistic Approach

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Focusing particularly on the imperative form *Look at that*, this paper proposes that discourse deictic usages of the demonstrative pronoun *that* reflect speakers' varying cognitive processes and that such processes can be analyzed uniformly in the context of Langacker's (2001, 2008) theory of current discourse space (CDS).

A common description of the difference between *this* and *that* explains that the former refers to an entity in the proximity of the speaker whereas the latter refers to a distant entity. When the entity is located at the same distance from both speaker and hearer, the selection of *this* or *that* depends on whose point of view is being expressed by the speaker (Fillmore 1982). Interestingly, according to Sawada (2013), the speaker sometimes indicates an entity close to themselves by the distal demonstrative *that*, as illustrated in (1). Sawada (2013) argued that this form of *that* reflects the speaker's perspective shift to the hearer and functions for drawing the hearer's attention. Although previous studies have highlighted intriguing phenomena, it remains unresolved why the hearer's region or speaker's perspective shift is involved in some specific usages of *that*.

(1) "Look at **that**!" He held out his hand. On the palm were three little pyramids of black, doughy clay.
    (Arthur Conan Doyle, "The Adventure of the Three Students," p. 604; quoted in Sawada 2013: 2)

In addition to the deictic usages exemplified above, we discuss two other discourse deictic usages of *that*. In (2), the speaker's use of the expression intends to show his happiness or surprise rather than attract the hearer's attention (as the referent is what the hearer brought to the speaker). On the other hand, in (3), *that* refers to the ongoing conversation itself.

(2)   Parker: Daddy, daddy, daddy! Look what I did!
      Booth: Wow, look at **that**!   (*Bones*, 2006/9, TV drama)
(3)   Jessica: Doesn't matter, because he cures more than he makes. Like when you stuck your nose
              into my case last year and he beat you.
      Harvey: Crushed him.
      Jessica: Then, he took his ball and went home.
      Harvey: Should have stayed there.
      Tanner: Look at **that**. Finishing each other's sentences. How cute.   (*Suits*, 2012/8, TV drama)

As a means to approach the research question, we analyzed data from the American TV dramas *Bones*, *The Mentalist*, and *Suits* (Seasons 1 through 4), which together comprise a total of 238 episodes spanning approximately 10,000 minutes. From our analysis, it can be clarified that speakers of the first usage (as in (1)) utter *Look at that* so that hearers focus on what is referenced by *that*. The primary purpose of speakers of the second usage (as in (2)) is then to emphasize the speaker's emotion, whereas speakers of the third usage (as in (3)) refer to the ongoing conversation or situation itself, thus dulling its pointing function. CDS would provide a straightforward description of the three usages in a unified manner: 1) descriptive axis; 2) individual axis; and 3) discursive axis (cf. Langacker 2016: 30).

References

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