

Demonstrative and Non-Demonstrative „dieser“ in German
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(Abstract)

As far as demonstratives are concerned, the standard procedure in reference grammars is to give a few examples for straightforward situational use (pointing to visible entities located at various degrees of distance away from the speaker), and to add a remark stating that the demonstrative may also be used anaphorically to refer back to a referent previously introduced in the discourse: Demonstrative pronouns such as German "dieser" are generally described as definite and rigid determiners. Ionin (2006) assumes that the so-called non-demonstrative use of English "this" is indefinite and therefore different from the common demonstrative use. In this talk I firstly want to present a taxonomy of further uses of „dieser“ in German (recognitional use, discourse-deictic use, non-demonstrative use), willing to establish clear-cut criteria in order to differentiate non-demonstrative uses of „dieser“ from demonstrative ones – aiming on facilitating further research on the characteristics of non-demonstrative „dieser“ (how it differs from definite and indefinite NPs) and with the future goal to hypothesize on the question if we should treat the phenomenon of non-demonstrative „dieser“ as an extension of the standard deictic use or if we should assume two different lexical entries, as Ionin (2006) does.

I will compare the different forms of uses and point out similarities and potential links or intermediate stages between them, arguing that a potential interface between demonstrative and non-demonstrative uses of „dieser“ might lie in the recognitional use, which can only be distinguished from the non-demonstrative form by factors like hearer-accessibility/hearer-given vs. hearer-new information.

References:

Ionin, T. (2006). This is Definitely Specific: Specificity and Definiteness in Article Systems. *Natural Language Semantics* 14(2), 175-234.