REGULATIONS ON USE

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The contents of manuals, entries therein and field-kit materials are modified from time to time, and this provides an additional motivation for keeping close contact with the Language and Cognition Department. We would welcome suggestions for changes and additions, and comments on the viability of different materials and techniques in various field situations.

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Supplements to the Wilkins 1999 Demonstrative Questionnaire
Nick Enfield, Michael Dunn. June 2001.

Projects: Space.

Priority: Mid.

1) Additional elicitation scenes: Shared space

Task: Questionnaire. One informant at a time. This should take only a few minutes to do. If you are doing the 'Wilkins Questionnaire' (see appendix to this manual), then do this at the same time.

This task adds two new scenes to the original set of 25 scenes of the Wilkins Demonstrative Questionnaire. For general background on the task, see the appendix to this volume. The specific background to these additional scenes is as follows: It is recognized that while metric distance between speaker and/or addressee and referent is important in the selection of demonstratives, precise metric distance alone cannot account for the choices speakers make in real situations. The Wilkins questionnaire turns up a number of situations where, given the distances between speaker, referent, and addressee, more than one demonstrative could conceivably be used. In real instances, however, one form gets selected over the others - What conditions the selection? These two scenes examine the effects of 'shared' versus 'non-shared' space.
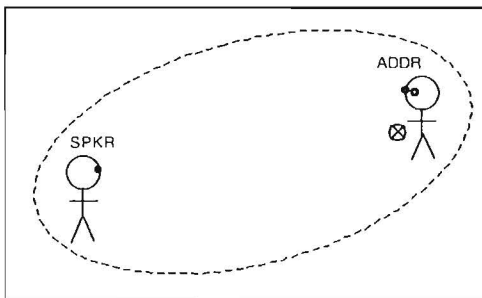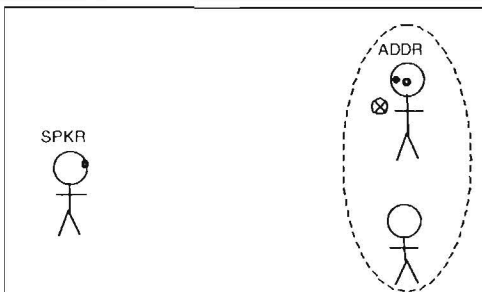
26.		Imagine that S and A are playing catch with a ball (marked '⊗'). In the language you are working on, which demonstrative(s) would/could the speaker use to refer to the ball (e.g. in saying 'This?/that? ball us easy to catch'). IMPORTANT: the two should be currently engaged in activity focussed on the referent, but the referent should be with the addressee throughout the time of speech.
27.		Now, imagine that, as before, two people are playing catch, and once again the ball is with the addressee, but this time the speaker is not one of the two people currently interacting. This time, the speaker is outside the 'engagement space' created by the game of catch.

Observations of the use of demonstratives in market-place interactions recorded in Laos suggest that the 'distal' demonstrative in Lao encodes the idea that the referent is 'not here' in some relevant sense, and that what defines 'here' for the speaker at any given time can depend crucially on his or her current relationship to the referent and addressee in terms of interactional engagement. When people engage in focussed interaction together, a space is created around them, a kind of 'bubble' which forms by virtue of their engagement - this 'bubble' becomes a salient 'place' for the two of them, and thus 'here' is the same place for them at that time. In other words, when speaker and addressee are physically engaged in a cooperative interaction, then speaker's 'here' is addressee's 'here'.

In Lao this results in the proximal demonstrative being the most likely choice in Figure 26, but impossible in the case of Figure 27. In scene 27, the addressee's salient 'here' is within that engagement space, and the speaker is clearly outside of that. So, in this scene, while the relative metric distances between Speaker, Addressee, and Referent are exactly as in Figure 26, the speaker's 'here' is no longer the addressee's 'here'

2) Language-internal comparison of spatial demonstrative systems

In order to maximize comparability of data, in the classic version of the exophoric demonstratives elicitation task the experimenter is asked to investigate demonstrative adjectives and demonstrative pronouns. This follows from the general principle in semantic typology of comparing identical linguistic functions, rather than, for instance, trying to compare word classes across languages without reference to their usage. The prototypical elicitation frame for a term in the exophoric demonstrative task is one in which the term is used in modifier function in an NP with a head noun, e.g. 'that book'. It may however also be fruitful to investigate systems of spatial demonstratives in a language used in other functions. Many languages have parallel series of spatial demonstratives which function in different syntactic domains, e.g. demonstrative adverbs 'here', 'there'. In some languages these parallel systems of spatial demonstratives have different numbers of members than the NP modifier series, and so presumably must encode different spatial categories. Even where there are the same number of terms, and where these terms seem to encode the same categories as demonstrative nominal modifiers, this is an empirical question which has not been addressed.

The descriptive task is as follows:
- describe what form classes of spatial demonstratives occur
- determine suitable elicitation frames for each additional class
- depending on your time constraints and level of interest, either
  (i) investigate additional demonstrative classes selectively
  (ii) carry out the entire questionnaire for each additional class
Note that for some languages, selective investigation of other demonstrative classes may be sufficient to determine whether there are important phenomena to be investigated. If you do find differences between the spatial usage of different demonstrative systems we strongly encourage you to carry out the full questionnaire.

3) Opportunistic observations of demonstrative usage

Fieldworkers often have good cause to be skeptical about elicited language data. The usual way of getting around this is to use analysis of spontaneous texts to provide a 'benchmark' of natural language use. In the case of spatial demonstratives, our existing text corpora are unlikely to be adequate. In our recorded texts speakers are often talking about space in a remembered/mythical (or otherwise non-present) landscape, or they are talking about real, present space, but the speaker's intention cannot be reconstructed from the recorded data due to limitations of the recording medium (audio only, video frame does not include target, etc). To get around this, we would like fieldworkers to record their observations of the use of demonstratives in context. This should be carried out as the opportunity arises, that is, whenever the fieldworker observes a demonstrative being used spontaneously with a spatial meaning. It is unlikely that you will be lucky enough to have a video-camera aimed and running at such a time; however, it should be possible to produce a good description by producing a diagram/sketch map and a written description of the context.

Each observation should be compared to similar scenes from the structured elicitation. It will be particularly interesting to have the circumstances of naturalistic demonstrative use that does not

correspond to elicited terms. Note that the 1999 structured elicitation does not control for attention shift / attention directing, which seems to be a more common parameter of demonstrative selection than has sometimes been assumed (see 2001 Hidden colours task: demonstratives, attention, and interaction).