An Analysis of the Basic Meaning of Turkish Demonstratives in Face-to-Face Conversational Interaction

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Abstract

The present paper provides an analysis of the modern Turkish demonstrative pronouns, bu, su and o based on their usage in natural discourse. In contrast to the previous acounts of the Turkish demonstrative system and more general claims about the basic meaning of demonstratives as spatial, the present analyis shows that the demonstrative su does not encode spatial meaning but rather social and interactive meaning as basic.

The Modern Turkish demonstrative system makes a three way distinction among *bu, su* and *o*. These demonstrative pronouns can also function as personal pronouns or adjectives. In the literature there has been contradictory claims in terms of how this three way distinction can be characterized. Lyons (1977) has proposed that it can be characterized as a *person oriented system* where (1) *bu* refers to things close to the speaker, (2) *su* close to the addressee and (3) *o* away from both the speaker and addressee. Bastuji (1976) has argued that a *distance oriented system* characterizes the distinction better where (1) *bu* refers to things close to the speaker, (2) *o* distal to the speaker and (3) *su* encodes the same spatial distance as does *bu* but with an additional emphatic component. Serebrennikov and Gadzieva (1979) have also claimed that the demonstratives — across the Turkic languages — are based on a *distance oriented system*, yet in a different way than Bastuji has proposed : (1) *bu* signals immediate proximity, (2) *su* somewhat removed from the speaker, and (3) *o* more distal.

All of these general claims about the basic meaning of Turkish demonstratives have been based on the analysis of written text and paradoxically without examining how speakers refer to objects or places by using these

demonstratives in face-to-face conversational interaction. Furthermore these previous analysis have based their claims on the assumption that all demonstratives encode spatial semantic distinctions as basic (Anderson and Keenan, 1985 ; Fillmore, 1975, 1982 ; Lakoff, 1974, Lyons, 1977, 1982) and that their social and interactive meaning develop or are derived from their basic spatial meanings (Klein ; 1983 ; Lakoff 1974 ; Lyons 1977).

In this paper I will provide an analysis of the actual use of Turkish demonstratives in face-to-face conversational discourse and investigate whether either one of the proposed semantic distinctions can capture the meaning of these demonstratives as they are used in natural discourse. Based on this analysis, I will question the assumption that the demonstrative *su* encodes a spatial semantic distinction and provide evidence that *su* encodes social and interactive meaning as basic rather than a spatial one.

Part of the analysis I will present here is based on the actual use of Turkish demonstratives in face to face conversational interaction. The analyzed data come from two videotaped multi-party face-to face conversations. One of them is a painting and the other one is a ceramic class where the participants (a teacher and several students) discuss the paintings or the multiple ceramic objects placed around them. The other part of the analysis is based on an elicitation technique (Pederson and Wilkins, 1996) in which two native speakers are asked to use the three demonstratives to refer to the three cups with different colors placed on a vertical or horizontal line on a table in front of them.

If all the three demonstratives encoded spatial distinctions, that is *bu* and *o* relatively apart from each other and *su* in the middle, then we would *not* expect speakers to use *su* for the same distances that can be referred to with forms *bu* or *o*. However, the analysis of the use of these forms in natural discourse shows that speakers use *su* as a variation of *o* or *bu*. That is, in the course of an interaction speakers might switch between demonstratives *bu* and *su* as well as *su* and *o* even though the objects referred to remain stationary. Below I give two examples for both of these types of usage.

Use of *su* as a variation of *bu*

Ex 1

1.0 Student 1	Hangisi	20 puan	daha	fazla aldi ?
	which	20 points	more	took ?
	Which one took 20 more points ?			

1.1.	Teacher	su
		this/that[1]

1.2.	Stud. 2	pointing at another object in silence

1.3.		o	mu	aldi ?
		that	Q	got ?
		that one got it ?		

1.4.		ha	ben	**bu**	dedim	ama
		ooh	I	this	said	but
		ohh ! but I said this one				

In this example, one of the students is asking the teacher, which painting got 20 points more (1.0). In the immediate surrounding of the teacher, there are two paintings, one closer and one further away from her. In response to the question, she points to the painting closest to her and uses the form *su* (1.1). But at that time, another student points to the other object that is further away (in silence). Then the teacher use the *o* form pointing at that object that is further away from her (1.3), and then goes back to the same object she has referred to, but this time with *bu* (1.4). This example shows that the same speaker referred to the same object first with *su* and then with *bu* even though the relative distance of the object from her has not changed.

Use of *su* as a variation of *o*

Ex 2

2.1. Student	mesela	hocam	**su**	oval	mesela
	for example	sir	this/that	oval	for example
	sir for example, this/that oval for example				

2.2.	**sunun**	dis yuzeyine	koyup ta
	this/that -GEN	out surface-POSS-DAT	put
	if you put on this/that's outside surface		

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1 I will use the translation this/that for the meaning of *su* for the purposes of these examples, but of course claim that the meaning of *su* does not capture any of them.

2.3.   **ondan**   da   olabilir

          that-ABL   also   be

          it might be from that too

In this example, the teacher and the two students are standing around a table that contains the ceramic objects that are in the immediate focus of the conversation. However, time to time, they also talk about the objects that are further away from the table, but that are still in the room. In utterance, 2.1., the student is referring to an object that is far away from the table and at the far end corner of the room. She refers to this object with the form *su* while pointing at it. This is the object that is the furthest away of all the objects in the room. If *su* was used to refer to objects somewhat further away but still closer to the speaker, the student should have used the form *o* but not *su* to refer to this object but in the actual usage she preferred *su* Furthermore, in line, 2.3. she used the form *o* to refer to the same object, also suggesting that *su* can be used a variation of *o*.

The elicitation technique has also shown similar results. Two native speaekers were asked to use the three demonstratives to refer to the three cups with different colors placed on a vertical or horizontal line on a table in front of them. In the vertical placement, *su* was used to refer to the furthest of the three objects (where the speaker was expected to use *o*) as well as to the nearest one (where the speaker was expected to use *bu*). There was even one usage where the speaker referred to all the three objects with *su*. In the horizontal placement the speaker was situated right across from the cup that was in the middle. The speakers referred to the object on the right with *su* and on the left with *bu* even though they were both at the same distance away from where the speaker was. The speakers also referred to the object on the right with *su* and on the left with *o*.

Thus, the elicitation technique as well as the examples form the actual use demonstrated that *su* could be easily used for the objects away from the speaker in the same semantically encoded distances that could be referred to with *bu* or *o*. This suggests that the basic meaning of *su* does not semantically encode distance away from the speaker as distinct form *bu* or *o*. Rather analysis shows that the demonstrative *su* encodes social and interactive distinctions as basic. The analysis conducted so far shows that the use of *su* as opposed to *bu* or *o* captures pragmatic and interactive usage as outlined below. *Su* might encode :

a) The new versus old mention of the object referred to in the context.

    This might explain why in line 1.2 and 2.1 the speakers used the *s u* form instead of the *bu* or the *o* form since both were the first mention of that referent in the context.

b) To focus the attention of the interlocutors on important referents and to establish orientation. This claim was evidenced by the fact that :

i) The demonstrative *su* was used at the beginning of the utterances more frequently than the other demonstratives ;

ii) *su* is rarely used with purely referential utterances :

    * su kitap kirmizidir   this/that book is red.

but rather with directives, or question/answer utterances.

A further analysis with pointing gestures and their relation to the usage of the form *su* will also be provided in the presentation.

Therefore I claim in this paper that the Turkish demonstrative *su* does not encode a spatial semantic distinction. Even though the distinction between *bu* and *o* can still be understood to be based on a distance oriented system, I claim that *su* does not belong in the same system. This analysis of the Turkish demonstrative *su* is in line with other analysis of demonstratives in other languages that makes the claim that the basic semantic distinction demonstratives encode are not primarily and necessarily spatial but their social and interactive meaning can also be basic (Hanks, 1990 ; Laury, 1996).

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Changes in Patterns of Thinking about Motion with L2 Acquisition

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Abstract

Within a framework that views speech and gesture as a single-integrated system (McNeill 1992), this paper discusses how patterns of thinking about motion change linguistically and gesturally for Spanish-speaking ESL learners in their process of acquiring English.

Introduction

A motion event is the movement of some entity through space and consists of the following components (Talmy 1985 ; Aske 1989) : motion (the fact of motion), figure (the moving object), ground (the reference object(s) in relation to which the figure moves), path (the direction of the motion), and manner (the way the motion is performed). Languages differ in how they indicate path and manner. Based on where a language encodes path, Talmy has classified languages into two categories : verb-framed and satellite-framed languages.

Spanish is a verb-framed language, motion and path are indicated by the verb, and manner if present in speech is indicated outside the verb by an adjunct or adverbial. For example, in *y sale volando* « and exits flying », the verb *sale* indicates path while the adverbial *volando* indicates manner.

English is a satellite-framed language, motion and manner are indicated by the verb, and path is indicated by a satellite, an adjunct or preposition. For example, in « and flies out of the cage », the verb « flies » indicates manner while the adverb « out » indicates path.

Second language acquisition can be defined as the acquisition of another language after the age of three or four (Klein 1986). In acquiring a