

PRAGMATICS AND THE SOCIAL MEANING OF DETERMINERS

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Abstract

Language users draw all kinds of inferences concerning the opinions, moods, backgrounds, and social relations of speakers on the basis of what they say, and much of what is conveyed depends only indirectly, if at all, on the literal content of what is said. Though meaning beyond the literal comprises a hefty and potent share of linguistic meaning—as recognized in the traditions of both Gricean pragmatics and meaning-based sociolinguistics—much remains to be uncovered and explained as regards this domain. In this work, I develop a socio-pragmatic framework for understanding meaning beyond the literal, with an eye toward social meaning in particular, and with definite referential phrases as my empirical focus. The framework is centered around four principles. In brief: (i) An utterance’s content includes both entailments and non-entailed, associative (i.e., indexical) content; (ii) The significance of an utterance depends upon context and upon what distinguishes the utterance from functionally related alternative utterances; (iii) The importance of a given alternative in determining the significance of an utterance is a function of its relatedness to the actual utterance and of how well it accords with conversational expectations; and (iv) An utterance is particularly likely to have special significance where it violates conversational expectations. I apply these principles in two case studies of social meaning, examining the definite article *the* and demonstratives.

In the first case study, I show that, in referring to a group of people, using *the* (‘the Americans’) as opposed to a bare plural (‘Americans’) tends to depict the group as a monolith of which the speaker is not a part. I provide qualitative and quantitative evidence of

this social effect, based in large part on two corpus-based, variationist studies of the use of these expressions in political discourse. Second, I sharpen the insights of previous research on the social meanings of demonstratives (e.g., Lakoff 1974), and explain why they serve as a useful resource for expressing exclamation and evaluativity and for promoting a sense of shared perspective and experience between interlocutors. In both cases, I explain the relevant social meanings via the socio-pragmatic framework developed herein: we can understand the social meanings associated with these expressions by examining the expressions' content in the light of contextual (especially social) factors and the content of functionally related alternative expressions.

In addition to providing new insights into the social character of English determiners, this work makes the case that social meaning is an indispensable facet of interpretation and use, demonstrates the advantages of pursuing semantic, pragmatic, and sociolinguistic research in tandem, and pushes toward a unifying theory of meaning beyond the literal.

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Chapter 1

A socio-pragmatic framework

There are, of course, all sorts of other maxims (aesthetic, social, or moral in character) [. . .] I have stated my maxims as if [the chief purpose of conversation] were a maximally effective exchange of information; this specification is, of course, too narrow, and the scheme needs to be generalized [. . .]

Grice (1975: 47). “Logic and conversation.”

The bottom line is that it is time to integrate the study of variation with the study of meaning in language more generally.

Eckert (2011: 4–5). “The future of variation studies.”

When in examining human language one considers seriously that every communicative act is, by definition, a social act, one begins to see the very breadth and depth with which social considerations pervade language usage and interpretation. There can be no doubt, for instance, that what a speaker says can lead to all sorts of effects and inferences concerning the speaker’s mood, background, social relations, attitudes, and so on. Understanding human language, then, involves understanding not only the conveyance of literal content but also the social significance of people’s utterances and, at least for the analyst, the dynamics that underlie such social significance.

The present work is intended in part as a demonstration of this principle. Paying particular attention to English demonstratives and the definite article *the*, I will show that social meaning is an indispensable part of language usage and interpretation, even for function words. Moreover, I will show how a broadly socio-pragmatic perspective on language explains why particular expressions tend to have the social significance (i.e., social meaning) that they have in practice, based on interactions between context, pre-existing meanings, and competition with alternative expressions.

To give an example of the kind of meaning of interest in this work, consider the following. Our setting is a 2008 U.S. presidential debate between then Senators Barack Obama and John McCain. Addressing Obama's voting record on the issue of energy, McCain said:

It was an energy bill on the floor of the Senate – loaded down with goodies, billions for the oil companies – and it was sponsored by Bush and Cheney.

You know who voted for it? You might never know. *That one* [gesturing to Obama]. You know who voted against it? Me.

From the perspective of conveying literal, descriptive content, McCain's referring term for Obama was unproblematic and uninteresting. It was perfectly clear in the context to whom McCain intended to refer. Nonetheless, his use of the expression *that one* drew a great deal of attention, mostly negative, as in the following reactions:

- (1) a. "Senator Obama has a name. You'd expect your opponent to use that name."¹
- Obama strategist David Axelrod
- b. "... [a] slightly dehumanizing phrase..."²
- Seth Colter Walls, *Huffington Post*
- c. "You are trying to be the president of the United States, and you're referring to

¹Datta, Arnab. "Debating McCain reference to 'that one'." *ABC News Online*. 7 October 2008. Last accessed 22 July 2014. <http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/politics/2008/10/debating-mccain/>.

²Walls, Seth Colter. "'That one,' McCain calls Obama in debate." *Huffington Post*. 7 October 2008. Last accessed 22 July 2014. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/10/07/that-one-mccain-calls-oba_n_132802.html.

another man as ‘that one’?”³
- P. Diddy

Each of the responses criticizes McCain’s choice of words as inappropriate or disrespectful. The reactions were not to the entailed, descriptive content of McCain’s utterance *per se*—instead, it was his way of saying what he said that was considered offensive.

Why did McCain’s referring expression offend people? This work revolves around answering such questions—showing how inferencing over context (which includes interlocutors’ ideologies and their expectations concerning their interaction), the pre-existing meaning of the expression used, and, in many cases, the pre-existing meanings of expressions that might have been used instead, helps explain patterns of usage and interpretation, with a particular focus on social meaning. In the present case, upon which I will elaborate later in the chapter, the complex socio-political context surrounding McCain’s use of *that one* (including expectations for the discourse at hand) and the availability of alternative expressions like *him* and *Senator Obama* together provide the grounds for the reactions cited in (1).

The rest of this chapter is structured as follows. First, I will situate the work within the broader context of the linguistic subfields most commonly associated with meaning and variation in language, namely semantics and pragmatics on one hand, and sociolinguistics on the other. Neither tradition—as practiced historically, at least—speaks to all of the questions of interest herein on its own, but combining the two along the lines hinted at above yields a theoretical framework equipped to address these questions and others. This, along with an articulation of my view of the relation between meaning, variation, and change, is the work of Section 1.3. In that section I also show how the proposed framework handles the case of McCain’s *that one*. Finally, I provide a brief outline of the remainder of the dissertation, in which I apply the same general framework to aspects of the social meaning of *the* (Chapter 2–3) and demonstratives (Chapter 4) and variation in their use.

³P. Diddy. “Diddy Blog #27: McCain calls Obama ‘that one’ what the....” 8 October 2008. Last accessed 22 July 2014. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fGiYyYAAGc4>.

In the next two sections I will give an overview of the theoretical landscape within which the present work is situated, beginning with semantics and pragmatics and moving into sociolinguistics. There are of course exceptions to the broad-brush characterizations of these fields presented in this section. The goals here are: (i) to give a sense of what these traditions, as typically practiced, have (and do not have) to offer for grappling with the phenomena of interest, and what they have (and do not have) in common; and (ii) to motivate and set the stage for integrating these fields and recognizing their interdependency.

1.1 Meaning: A view from semantics and pragmatics

In this subsection I will provide a high-level overview of the nature of semantics and pragmatics for the purpose of situating and motivating this work. The separation of semantics and pragmatics into two subsections is motivated by rhetorical (organizational) considerations; as will be clear from the discussion, I do not view the two as straightforwardly separable.

1.1.1 Semantics

Semantics generally concerns the entailed content of linguistic units—usually words and phrases but also certain aspects of things like intonation—and how they are combined to form larger content-bearing units. We can think of the entailed content of a linguistic unit u as the content that a speaker would in theory be committing herself to in issuing a token of u irrespective of context. Consider, for instance, (2):

- (2) Einstein, the author of the general theory of relativity, noted that he had difficulty with math.

The entailed content of this sentence as a whole is presumably comprised of the propositions that Einstein authored the general theory of relativity and that he noted that he had difficulty with math. A speaker could not get away with saying (2) without committing

herself to the belief that those propositions are true. If a speaker were to say (2) and then shortly thereafter act or speak in a way to suggest that, say, Oppenheimer was the author of the general theory of relativity, a witness could very reasonably question the speaker's behavior.

Now, not all meaning is entailed. If, for instance, when asked her opinion of a particular film, a speaker were to say, "It's great," her utterance might in many circumstances convey, in addition to the entailed proposition that the film is great, the proposition that the film is not the speaker's absolute favorite—if it were, we might expect the speaker to say so explicitly. But this latter proposition is not strictly entailed by the speaker's utterance; indeed, the speaker could well follow up "It's great," with, "It's my favorite movie," without contradicting herself. Being non-entailed, such meanings are generally considered to fall under the heading of pragmatics, the subject of Section 1.1.2.

Nor is all entailed content identical in kind. Theorists have devised various ways of dividing entailed content into different types, though the distinctions drawn are sometimes hard to pin down precisely in practice. One principal dimension differentiating kinds of entailed content is whether or not the content is *at-issue* (e.g., AnderBois et al. 2010, Potts To appear), where the at-issue content of a sentence is essentially its primary, descriptive, literal content—for example, the "main assertion" of a declarative sentence. With respect to (2), for instance, this dimension separates the proposition that Einstein noted that he had difficulty with math from the proposition that Einstein was the author of the theory of general relativity—the former being the at-issue content. To see the difference, consider potential responses to (2), such as, "Are you sure about that?", "That's interesting!", or "No, he didn't!" On the default interpretation of such responses, they target the claim about Einstein and his purported trouble with math, rather than the proposition that he wrote the general theory of relativity. To comment on the non-at-issue content, a speaker would generally have to be more explicit and perhaps bring the discourse to a halt, as in, "(Wait,) are you sure that Einstein wrote the general theory of relativity?" or, "(Hold on,)

I didn't realize Einstein wrote the general theory of relativity!" etc. (Shanon 1976, Potts 2008, Tonhauser et al. 2011).

Other expressions and constructions that are often analyzed as bearing some content that is both entailed and not at-issue are things like the connective *but* (Rieber 1997) and a wide range of discourse particles. Certain presuppositions—things that must be true in order for an utterance to be sensible and felicitous—are also sometimes analyzed as consisting in entailed but not at-issue content (e.g., Chierchia and McConnell-Ginet 1990). A classic example comes from the word *stop*, as in (3). The use of *stop* in (3) takes for granted that the addressee was once a thief, and asks whether the addressee has ceased stealing. If the addressee has never stolen anything, a simple “no” response wouldn't do justice to reality, suggesting not that the addressee never stole, but that the addressee is still stealing.

(3) Have you stopped stealing?

As with the Einstein example above, the addressee would be best served by explicitly calling out the non-at-issue content, a là, “What do you mean have I *stopped* stealing? I never stole anything in the first place!”

Expressive content

Another kind of content that may in some cases be entailed but is not at-issue in the present sense is what in the semantics literature is sometimes called *expressive content*. Expressive content has received relatively little attention in semantic research (see Kaplan 2004 for conjectures as to why) but that trend has started to shift in recent years (see, e.g., Kaplan 2004; Corazza 2005; Potts 2007, McCready 2010; Gutzmann 2011).

The concept of expressive content, as opposed to *descriptive* content, is rather difficult to demarcate (though see Kaplan 2004 and Potts 2007) and perhaps better exemplified than defined. In essence, with expressive content the information conveyed is not spelled out or given via description, but rather “displayed” (Kaplan 2004). Consider the example

of *oops*. As Kaplan (2004) explains, the use of (4a) on one hand, and the declarative in (4b) on the other, seem to entail roughly the same content. But the two expressions, the former expressive and the latter descriptive, convey the content in different ways—one via an interjection that does not make a truth-claim and another via an explicit description of a situation that does make a truth-claim. (The same, says Kaplan, might be said of *ouch* and the statement *I am in pain*.)

- (4) a. Oops.
 b. I have just observed a minor mishap.

The difference is further illuminated by considering the relative appropriateness of different responses to the two. “No you haven’t,” for example, is a felicitous response to an utterance of the latter, but not of the former. One can of course object to a use of *oops*, but, as with presupposition, such objections typically require a different means of expression, like, “What do you mean, ‘oops’? That was a priceless antique you just dropped on the floor!”

Under this conception of expressive content, the kinds of social meaning typically of interest in sociolinguistics also qualify. As discussed at greater length in Section 1.2, using, for example, an apical variant of the suffix *-ing* or a backed version of the vowel in *trap* can allow a speaker to make a social statement without expressly doing so. However, perhaps because phonologically based expressive content is so thoroughly mutable and context-sensitive (Eckert 2012), it has received very little attention in the semantics literature (Smith et al. 2010 is one exception). Rather, the focus has been on expressive content that seems to involve more stable conventionality. Expressive content that has been analyzed as entailed shows up in a number of areas in language, from interjections (*oops*, *ouch*, *wow*, *yikes*) to curse words (*damn*, *blasted*, *bloody*) to honorifics (*madam*, *Senator*). Some expressions, such as certain epithets (e.g., *cad*, *bastard*, *coquette*, *harlot*), seem to contain both expressive and descriptive content, and it can be difficult to separate the two. To talk about an individual as a harlot, for instance, is to present someone as a certain kind of woman, but also to express a negative appraisal of that individual.

Beyond the challenge of differentiating between what is expressive and what is descriptive, it is often very hard to provide a satisfactory statement of just what the expressive content of a given linguistic unit is supposed to be. This property, which Potts (2007) terms *descriptive ineffability*, makes it similarly challenging to determine what part of a linguistic unit's expressive content, if any, is strictly entailed and supposed to hold across contexts.

Contextual considerations

In any event, semantic research on expressive content to date has generally focused on purportedly entailed content. Thus, bringing things back to the broader context of this thesis, even if some of the kinds of meaning of interest herein are instances of expressive content, the present work is a departure from the bulk of existing semantics literature in that there is no requirement here that the meaning of interest be entailed. Returning to the example of McCain and Obama, for instance, it is certainly not the case that every use of *that one* displays disdain for the relevant referent on the part of the speaker—consider a child gleefully reaching for a toy, saying, “that one!” Furthermore, whatever entailed expressive content a given expression may bear, that content cannot capture the full expressive force of using the expression in context. The communicative impact of saying *damn* in a classroom is sure to be different from that of saying *damn* in a casino, despite whatever intersection in meaning the two uses would share. Thus, the existing literature on expressive content provides many valuable insights into this domain, but those insights alone do not provide all that we need to handle the range of phenomena to be explored in this work.

As a more general point, one can only get so far in the study of natural language meaning if one attempts to ignore context. Even determining the at-issue content of a given utterance requires consideration of context. For one, context plays a crucial role in disambiguation. A hearer of (2), for instance, must draw on context to determine the referent of *Einstein*, so that she ends up with the famed physicist and not, say, Dr. Emmett Brown's

pet dog in the *Back to the Future* series.⁴ Context is also essential in domain restriction, which is what permits us to interpret a sentence like (5) as applying not to all individuals in the universe but to all the individuals in a particular domain (e.g., everyone who attended a particular event).

(5) Everyone had a good time.

Though people draw a line between semantics and pragmatics in different places, for most theorists the inclusion of context means we are at least dipping our toe in the pragmatics pool. And we're going to need context, so let's jump in head first.

1.1.2 Pragmatics

Determining where semantics ends and pragmatics begins, if such a place exists, is not of any major importance for our concerns. Given natural language's thoroughgoing dependence on context, a great many studies billed as semantics involve taking context into account in any event. Nevertheless, contextual considerations and usage are typically regarded as the domain of pragmatics.

Context—most generally, the facts about the world that accompany an utterance (though see, e.g., Stalnaker 1998, 2002 for a narrower definition)—plays a crucial role in the interpretation and use of natural language. First, to the extent that there is a sensible division between literal content and non-literal content, context is heavily involved in the determination of the former. As mentioned above, we turn to context in determining what situations and domains of individuals are relevant to the utterance at hand, so that a token of a word like *everyone* receives an appropriate interpretation (everyone in the world/at the party/in my seminar/etc.). Similarly, context gives us clues as to how to interpret a given use of deictic terms like *I*, *you*, *last week*, *under our feet*, etc. Context is also involved in disambiguating between multiple possible interpretations of an utterance, as in parsing (6),

⁴*Back to the Future*. 1985. Universal Pictures.

and in resolving the reference of a pronoun or other anaphoric element (Kehler et al. 2007), as in determining to whom *he* refers in (7):

(6) Nancy spotted the ant with a magnifying glass.

(7) The wizard gave the scarecrow a diploma because he didn't have a brain.

Furthermore, context bears upon the interpretation of vague expressions like relative degree adjectives (Kennedy 2007). An ordinary utterance like (8) brings many of these elements together—exemplifying language's deep dependence on context—and there are other such features as well.

(8) I asked her to buy me an ice cream yesterday, but she said it was too expensive.

But beyond its role in disambiguation and the resolution of contextual parameters, context has another crucial part to play in language use and interpretation. People do not strictly interpret utterances literally; they also draw inferences from what is said in light of the context in which it is said. This feature of language in practice undergirds the notion of *conversational implicature*, a central concept in pragmatic research, laid out in Grice's (1975) seminal "Logic and conversation." In semantics and pragmatics, as they have proceeded historically, it is in the area of conversational implicature that the context-sensitivity and inferentiality of what is communicated in a linguistic exchange is most clear.

Conversational implicature

In the spirit of Grice (1975) and those who followed, Potts (To appear) defines Gricean conversational implicature via the following two definitions, the second being dependent on the first.

The Cooperative Principle: Make your contribution as is required, when it is required, by the conversation in which you are engaged.

– **Quality:** Contribute only what you know to be true. Do not say false things. Do not say things for which you lack evidence.

- **Quantity:** Make your contribution as informative as is required. Do not say more than is required.
- **Relation (Relevance):** Make your contribution relevant.
- **Manner:** (i) Avoid obscurity; (ii) avoid ambiguity; (iii) be brief; (iv) be orderly.

Potts (To appear: (8))

Conversational Implicature

Proposition q is a *conversational implicature* of utterance U by agent A in context C if, and only if:

- i. it is mutual, public knowledge of all the discourse participants in C that A is obeying the Cooperative Principle.
- ii. in order to maintain (i), it must be assumed that A believes q ; and
- iii. A believes that it is mutual, public knowledge of all the discourse participants that (ii) holds.

Potts (To appear: (9))

The idea behind the cooperative principle and its related maxims of Quality, Quantity, Relation, and Manner is that interlocutors have expectations for what utterances will look like—they expect that an utterance will be relevant to the conversation, that it will be informative on some level but not contain more information than necessary, that it will be truthful, and that it won't be overly complex or difficult to understand. A conversational implicature, then, is essentially a proposition inferred from a speaker's utterance U in context C , as a way of maintaining the belief that the speaker, in issuing U in C , is in fact acting in accordance with conversational expectations, even if the form and entailed content of U alone seem to threaten that belief.

This perspective merits critical consideration, but first let me illustrate the notion of conversational implicature via the following prototypical example. This example is intended both to give a sense of how conversational implicature is said to work and, importantly, to

illustrate the sometimes overlooked fact that the cooperative principle and its maxims only take us so far in deriving a conversational implicature—contextual considerations, too, play an essential role.

- (9) [A wants to set B up on a blind date with C. It is mutual knowledge between A and B that A highly values honesty, sees the good in people, and wants B to go on the date. It is also mutual knowledge between A and B that, all other things being equal, B would prefer to date someone good looking. In the course of the conversation about the potential date, A and B share the following exchange:]

B: So, tell me more about this C guy. I mean, is he good looking?

A: He's really nice!

From A's response, given the context, B will likely arrive at the proposition that C is not good looking. How does this work? A Gricean, conversational-implicature account drawing on the definitions given above would go something like this. First, observe that the entailed content of A's response does not at all speak to the question of C's looks; it merely comments on his personality. Thus, based on the form and entailed content of A's response alone, we seem to have a violation of at least the maxim of Relation (relevance). How can the belief that A is meeting conversational expectations be maintained?

Let's consider the context. For one, context plays a role in determining the set of alternative responses B might consider. In the present scenario, a "yes" or "no" (or related utterances like, "absolutely," "he sure is," "not really," "not exactly") seem like obvious possible alternatives. Of course, one can easily imagine a context where the set of alternatives considered in interpreting an utterance could be more constrained, either because of particular details of the utterance situation or some more general norms (i.e., "maxims") of a given speech community. But let's suppose that in this scenario, affirmative and negative answers are both permissible. Orthogonal to the maxims, it is also the case in the present scenario that A and B both know that A wants B to go on a date and also generally likes to paint people in a favorable light. This makes it relatively unlikely that A will say something negative about C, unless it is necessary, and leaves open the possibility that C is not good

looking. Moreover, this suggests that if C is good looking, A, when asked about C's looks has an incentive to say so. These are contextual considerations that, independent of the maxims, favor an affirmative response.

In addition to according with A's personality and goals and B's knowledge thereof, an affirmative response would also do well in terms of Grice's maxims of Quantity and Relation, as such a response would likely be considered both sufficiently informative (without saying too much) and relevant, respectively. Note that, here again, context is active—it surely constrains what counts for B as an appropriately informative and relevant answer. As for Manner, a simple “yes” or “yeah” or “absolutely” or something similar would certainly be brief, clear, and unambiguous. Thus, it seems that nearly all considerations bias toward a (relatively brief) affirmative response. The only open question is whether or not such a response would be truthful. If so, it would be the clear choice.

Yet A did not provide an affirmative response. And, as noted above, A's response is, on its face, not as relevant to the question posed as an affirmative or negative response would have been. In order for B to preserve the belief that A is observing the cooperative principle and attempting to furnish helpful, relevant information, B may well conclude that A's response is implicitly a yes or a no. If it would have been truthful to say that C is good looking, then a (relatively brief) affirmative response would have been favorable in terms of all the maxims and in supporting A's goals to speak well of people and to have B go on a date with C. Taking all of this together, B may well reason that if C were good looking, A would have said so. But A didn't say so, leading to the further conclusion that A's response is in fact a response in the negative—i.e., that C is not particularly good looking. Thus, A and B's shared knowledge, together with general conversational expectations, allow A to convey the relevant information while still playing up C's positive traits and obviating the need for lying or for an explicit critique of his looks.

It is worth emphasizing that Grice's maxims and definition of conversational implicature alone don't tell us exactly why the conversational implicature is what it is; rather, they

help explain why there might be one and how, *given a particular context*, one might arrive at a given implicature. The implicature derived above, for instance, relies crucially on features of the supposed context. To see this, suppose we add to the context outlined in (9) that it is common knowledge between A and B that A thinks B has the wrong priorities, and is trying to encourage B to care less about appearances. In such circumstances, A's response might come across not as a "no," but rather a signal that A does not wish to entertain B's question.

To recap: in essence, conversational implicatures are meanings that are not entailed content but rather arise in considering what is said in a given situation in light of what might instead have been said, expectations about the discourse at hand, and other contextual factors, under the assumption that the speaker is being cooperative. Though sometimes underemphasized, context is king in conversational implicature, encapsulating, among other things, discourse participants' expectations for how the discourse at hand will go, and the set of alternative expressions they consider in issuing and interpreting utterances. In this perspective on meaning lies much (but not all) of what we need to capture the phenomena of interest herein. As stated above with regard to our working example, the negative reactions to McCain's use of *that one* are grounded in contextual factors including the set of utterances McCain might reasonably have used instead and expectations about the discourse.

That said, even when we add to entailed content (and processes of domain restriction, disambiguation, anaphora, and the resolution of other contextual parameters) the notion of conversational implicature as it is traditionally defined—and especially as it is studied in practice—we still can't quite capture the full range of meanings and dynamics of interest in this work.

1.1.3 Challenges for a traditional semantico-pragmatic approach

The main challenges for an approach to the phenomena of interest based in traditional semantics and pragmatics are three. I will take each in turn.

Challenge 1: Intention and non-natural meaning

The domain of the vast bulk of semantic and pragmatic studies of meaning is what Grice (1957/1989) called *non-natural meaning* or *meaning_{NN}*. Grice (1957/1989: 220) defines *meaning_{NN}* as follows: “‘A meant_{NN} something by *x*’ is (roughly) equivalent to ‘A intended the utterance of *x* to produce some effect in an audience by means of the recognition of this intention.’” This is a useful definition of meaning—social or otherwise—and picks out a coherent and interesting set of phenomena. But also of interest are instances of meaning for which this high bar for mutual shared knowledge and intention-recognition (a form of which is also present in the definition of conversational implicature) is not met. Relative to our “He’s really nice!” example, for instance, A’s utterance is likely to convey that C is not good looking even if A doesn’t believe that it will or has no such communicative intention. In such circumstances, we would not have a case of conversational implicature or *meaning_{NN}* strictly defined, but the principles underlying the likely inference are of interest nonetheless. As another example, consider again McCain’s use of *that one*. Importantly, much of the commentary about his use of this term suggests that it was an unintentional slip-up (albeit one that, for some commentators, betrayed McCain’s true feelings):

- (10) a. Our guess? It was probably an off hand (read: unintentional) comment from McCain but in a debate almost entirely devoid of news or quotable one-liners, it stood out. And that is unlucky for McCain.⁵
- b. It’s the way you talk about an annoying child, if you don’t much care for children. It was odd, and, I think, revealing.⁶

⁵Cillizza, Chris. The Nashville Skyline Debate: First thoughts. *Washington Post* (online). 7 October 2008. Last accessed 12 July 2014. <http://voices.washingtonpost.com/the-fix/eye-on-2008/the-nashville-skyline-debate-f.html>.

⁶Hilzoy. Debate: Reaction. *Washington Monthly* (online). 7 October 2008. Last accessed 12 July 2014.

- c. I won't ever know what was in McCain's mind when he said 'that one', but the first thing that popped into my mind was 'niggre' [sic].⁷

These comments suggest that it's not clear what McCain's social intentions were in saying *that one*, disqualifying any social significance of his utterance from the category of meaning_{NN} or conversational implicature strictly defined, at least for these commentators. Nonetheless, regardless of McCain's actual intentions, his utterance was socially meaningful in an important sense and, as I will argue further on, predictably so.

Along similar lines, consider also those frustrating times when our tone of voice reveals our anger (or fear etc.), despite our explicit insistence that we are *not angry* (or afraid etc.). Again, in such circumstances the nature of our utterances communicates something about us, whether we want it to or not. Of course, whatever features of our utterances communicate anger, fear, etc. may be used in scenarios of mutual intention-recognition, and such uses are of course of interest as well. The point here is simply that cases where mutual intention-recognition does not hold also merit investigation and explanation (see also Traugott and Dasher's 2002 notion of "invited inferences.")

Challenge 2: Semantics, pragmatics, and the social in practice

The second issue is that the majority of semantico-pragmatic research on meaning has paid relatively little attention to social considerations and social meanings. This makes sense from a historical perspective: modern formal semantics has its roots in the analytic philosophical traditions of Frege and Russell. And, as stated in the first epigraph of this chapter, Grice, in his "Logic and Conversation"—the starting point of countless works on pragmatics—notes that: "I have stated my maxims as if [the purpose of language] were a maximally effective exchange of information" (Grice 1975: 47). Notably, Grice elaborates, "[T]his specification is, of course, too narrow," and acknowledges that the maxims

http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/archives/individual/2008_10/015076.php.

⁷Comment on Hilzoy. Debate: Reaction.

he outlines comprise only a proper subset of the range of principles at work in designing and interpreting utterances.

Nonetheless, research in pragmatics has gotten a lot of mileage out of Grice's original maxims (or slight modifications thereof, e.g., Horn 1984) and, accordingly, the study of conversational implicature, historically speaking, has most typically concerned how an utterance's form and propositional content, examined in light of alternative expressions and considerations of informativity, relevance, and efficiency, leads to an answer to a local question under discussion (to borrow a term from Roberts 1996) or an enrichment of an answer explicitly given. In the blind-date example discussed above, for instance, the calculated implicature constituted an answer to the question posed. Similarly, cases of scalar implicature, the subject of much pragmatic research, tend to involve a straightforward strengthening of the proposition expressed—for example, the inference that, "It was good," as an answer to the question, "How was it?" implicates "It was good, but not great/excellent."

Given the utility of Grice's original maxims and the general robustness of such conversational implicatures, it is easy, if perilous, to overlook (or at least underemphasize) the complex contextual considerations upon which conversational implicatures depend, and the cross-contextual variability in the extent to which a given maxim matters in a given exchange. Variation in the relative weight of maxims is a very real phenomenon. Keenan's (1976) work on Malagasy provides a useful example. Keenan (1976: 70, also cited in Horn 1984) observed that among Malagasy speakers in Madagascar, "If A asks B, 'Where is your mother?' and B responds, 'She is either in the house or at the market,' B's utterance is not usually taken to imply that B is unable to provide more specific information needed by the hearer." Keenan takes this to be evidence that "the expectation that speakers will satisfy informational needs is not a basic norm" among such speakers. Horn (1984: 17), reanalyzing Keenan's findings, has a different take, arguing that it is not that the pressure to be informative is altogether absent among such speakers, but that the pressure to avoid "*tsiny* (the responsibility, guilt, or other unpleasant consequences incurred

by uttering claims which turn out to be false and/or offensive)” simply outweighs the former pressure in many contexts. On either account, the Malagasy findings clearly show that the weight of the maxim of Quantity can vary from one situation or culture to the next, and they underscore the importance of contextual factors in understanding the significance of utterances. Moreover, as I illustrated with our blind date example, even when Grice’s maxims are clearly in force and strongly weighted, they are certainly not always sufficient for deriving a given conversational implicature.

It is clear that the study of pragmatics has in some cases come across as insufficiently socially and contextually informed, as evidenced by Silverstein’s (2010) claim that, “Gricean implicatures, whether conventional or nonce, whether conversational or structural, depend on a view of social communication as nothing more than denotation plus logical inference” (344). This assessment is an overstatement to be sure. Grice (1975: 56) himself stresses the importance of context: “[P]articuliarized conversational implicature [...involves] cases in which an implicature is carried by saying that *p* on a particular occasion in virtue of *special features of the context*” (emphasis added). Furthermore, Grice’s inclusion of the maxim of Manner also means that, even on its most narrow definition, conversational implicature is about more than denotation and logical inference. More generally, the very existence of studies on, for example, politeness and expressive content makes it clear that the socio-interactional facets of language have not been wholly overlooked in semantics and pragmatics (e.g., Lakoff 1973; Brown and Levinson 1987; Aoun and Choueiri 2000; Naruoka 2003; van Rooy 2003; Constant et al. 2009; Jay and Jansche-witz 2008; Gutzmann 2011).

Nonetheless, concerns about overemphasis on logic and the “exchange of information” and minimization of cultural and contextual variation are well taken. I certainly agree with Silverstein’s (2010: 342) claim that, “any analytic understanding of situated discourse and its structuring of necessity must take into account the *social interactional frame*, that is, the kind of social interactional event in which language use occurs, and its place in an

overall economy of social organization” (emphasis added). A more thorough accounting of social considerations and variation in semantico-pragmatic research would no doubt enrich existing analyses and make for a welcome broadening of the domain of studies of linguistic meaning. Already, then, we have motivation for integrating with semantics and pragmatics the field of sociolinguistics—the discipline for which variation and the social are the *sine qua non*. But before turning to sociolinguistics, let’s consider one more problem with applying semantics and pragmatics alone to the problems of interest in this work.

Challenge 3: Associative (indexical) meaning

The third challenge for a strictly semantico-pragmatic approach to the range of phenomena of interest is that, historically, semantics and pragmatics have paid little attention to the non-entailed associations or connotations of linguistic units—the concepts, situations, propositions, emotions, personae, etc. that a given linguistic unit evokes, or is otherwise associated with. The vast majority of studies of conversational implicature, for instance, consist in comparing the entailed content of a given utterance, together with its length and degree of clarity, to that of other utterances, without regard for its associations. But of course associations are a crucial factor in designing and interpreting utterances, too. For example, for this author, at least, the terms *peaceful* and *tranquil* have a different effect: the former bears a stronger connection to opposing concepts like violence; the latter with drug-induced states, owing to the derivative *tranquilizer*.

The importance of such considerations is evident in the practice of lexicography, where qualifiers like “esp. . . .” are frequently employed:

tome
noun chiefly humorous
a book, esp. a large, heavy, scholarly one: *a weighty tome*.⁸

As the definition above suggests, the use of *tome* rather than *book* has communicative

⁸“tome.” Def. 1. *New Oxford American Dictionary*. 2nd ed. 2005.

consequences. Some of the differences between the two terms are attributable to a version of Horn's (1984) insightful *division of pragmatic labor* (DPL; to be discussed at greater length in Section 1.3)—whereby marked forms tend to bear marked meanings—and the two terms could be argued to have different entailed content. Nonetheless, as I will argue in Section 1.3, DPL and its kindred only tell us where to expect marked meanings, not what they will be, and, to my knowledge, are rarely applied in analyzing social meanings in practice. Furthermore, there are certainly linguistic units that are co-extensional (or nearly so) and do not stand in so clear a relation of markedness, yet are certainly different in their distribution and what they communicate, as in the following terms for one's rear end:

(11) backside, behind, butt, derrière, heinie, keister, toches

These terms differ in the impressions they make, but, to the extent that they have the same descriptive content, their differences in meaning are neither entailed in the usual sense, nor derivative of entailed content in a given use.

So semantics and pragmatics as traditionally practiced generally do not take account of the meaningful associations of linguistic units. Nonetheless, I submit that such associations are an essential part of language, and that we can straightforwardly expand the classical Gricean model of pragmatics to accommodate them. This is a move I will make in Section 1.3.

Of course the field of sociolinguistics, particularly in recent years, has paid a great deal of attention to the meaningful associations of linguistic units and how they are used toward (especially socially) meaningful ends in the study of *indexicality*—providing another motivation for the integration of sociolinguistics, semantics, and pragmatics pursued herein.

1.1.4 Section summary

To summarize, the traditions of semantics and pragmatics encompass a wide range of meaning-related phenomena in natural language, from entailed content, both descriptive and expressive, to content inferred via conversational implicature. The findings and methodologies of these fields are foundational to the present work. At the same time, however, certain central facets of linguistic meaning and its underpinnings have been left under-explored to date, especially as regards variation, contextual (especially social) considerations, (un)intentionality, and associative meanings. Nevertheless, these matters have all received much attention within the field of sociolinguistics, to which I now turn.

1.2 Meaning: A view from sociolinguistics

1.2.1 Canonical studies of sociolinguistics

Historically, sociolinguistic research has primarily centered around exploring the dynamics of language change and the relation between social categories and linguistic variation (Eckert 2012). The main line of inquiry has included questions like: How does language vary by age, gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic class in a particular community? What was the socio-temporal course of a particular sound change?

Such studies have typically centered around one or more *sociolinguistic variables*. Most often, this term is used to refer to particular elements of language that may vary in their realization in some measurable way from one use to another. The most commonly examined variables are individual phonemes: /æ/, /t/, and the like. Studies typically proceed by analyzing the speech of one or more individuals in a given community, investigating what factors appear to condition the acoustic realization of the phoneme of interest in a particular phonological environment. Realization is measured via one or more metrics, depending on the phoneme: first, second, or third acoustic formants, voice onset time, and the

like. The same general principles apply to variationist studies of morphosyntactic variables, such as relativizers and the copula.

1.2.2 Envelopes of variation and the problem of synonymy

A crucial component of conducting variationist studies is determining the *envelope of variation*—that is, the set of variants that are included as instantiations of the variable of interest.⁹ For phonological studies, designating an envelope of variation for the purposes of analysis typically involves demarcating and dividing up the space of possible realizations of the relevant phoneme into a discrete set of variants: e.g., fronted vs. non-fronted /uw/. A study of variation in the English copula with third-person plural subjects, on the other hand, might have as its envelope of variation the set containing *is*, *'s*, *are*, and the null copula.

Settling on an envelope of variation is no trivial task—one's analytical choices about the scope and partitioning of the domain of variants have important consequences for one's analysis and interpretation. In a study of /uw/ in a given community, does dividing up realization space into fronted and non-fronted do justice to the nature of variation in that community? In a study of the English copula, should the *be* form be included? A central principle directing much variationist work is that all members of an envelope of variation ought to have the same meaning. This tenet is stated clearly in Weiner and Labov (1983) (also quoted in Cheshire 2005):

It is clear that the sharpest analytical conclusions on the conditioning factors that constrain linguistic change and variation can be made when form varies but meaning is constant.

Weiner and Labov (1983: 31)

But of course meaning comes in many different varieties. According to Romaine (1984),

⁹Notice the relation between the notion of an envelope of variation and the set of alternatives/competitors that figure into analyses of conversational implicature. I will have more to say on this in Section 1.3.

constant meaning, in practice, had (up to the time of her writing) generally meant equivalence in terms of at least descriptive content. Cheshire's (2005) more recent commentary on the matter suggests that the same principle has maintained dominance through the years.

Our understanding of language variation and change has been and continues to be vastly enriched by studies conducted in the spirit of Weiner and Labov's (1983) tenet. At the same time, however, such work cannot on its own fully capture the diversity and richness of language variation and change. As Romaine and Cheshire note, as a consequence of the insistence on meaning-equivalence, the range of variables analyzed in variationist studies has been relatively restricted. As an alternative, Romaine (1984) suggests shared function as what should unite the variants of a given envelope of variation, where function can have multiple dimensions—from referential or descriptive to socio-interactional to textual. Romaine, following Firth (1966) and Silverstein (1976), also notes that the referential or descriptive function should not be viewed as the only starting place for other kinds of meaning and function, or for studies of variation.

A more fundamental problem is that it is hard to argue that any two non-identical realizations of the same variable indeed have fully identical meanings or functions, at least once we expand the purview of meaning and function beyond descriptive content. Under a broad view of meaning, the idea that sociolinguistics concerns different ways of saying the same thing is problematic—if the variants themselves have different communicative force then, by definition, they do not say the same thing (Eckert 2008). Moreover, and importantly, as argued by Silverstein (2003), Eckert (2008), and others, the associative or *indexical* meaning of forms and variants is surely an important force behind language variation and change. That is, we simply cannot achieve a comprehensive picture of phonological and syntactic variation and change (let alone semantic variation and change, which is, after all, a kind of language change) without allowing for differences in at least some kinds of meaning among members of an envelope of variation. This observation is at the center of what Eckert (2012) has termed the “third wave” of variation studies, to which I

will turn in a moment.

The take-aways for the time being, however, are as follows. As will be further clarified in the next subsection, perfectly identical meaning or function cannot possibly define a multi-membered envelope of variation. Nonetheless, any analysis of variation necessarily involves comparing two or more things, and we need ways of defining what is and is not under consideration. The proposal I offer, to be reiterated in Section 1.3, is simply that in studies of variation and pragmatics we ought to be thoughtful and clear about what meanings/functions we think we are holding fixed in considering a set of alternatives. Doing so means paying careful attention to the various facets of meaning.

1.2.3 Variation and indexicality

In Section 1.1.2, I mentioned the role of associative meaning in language. In this section I will go into further depth on this topic, paying special attention to its place in sociolinguistic research.

To illustrate, consider Labov's (1963) classic study of English variation in Martha's Vineyard. Examining the diphthong /ay/, Labov found that while /ay/ had traditionally been pronounced with a centralized nucleus on the island, many Vineyarders had moved toward the U.S. mainland pronunciation, with a lowered nucleus. At the same time, Labov found that some speakers, especially speakers in the English fishing community, were, contra the general trend of nucleus-lowering, persisting in or moving toward the more traditional centralized variant. Citing clashes between the traditional fishing culture and economy and the increasing presence of mainland tourists on the island, Labov argued that the use of the centralized variant, the variant historically associated with the island, was a way of claiming authenticity, loyalty to traditions of the Vineyard, and resistance to the increasing influence of the mainland. That is, using /ay/ was a way of communicating a claim to and affinity for traditional Vineyard authenticity, in virtue of its associations with the traditional dialect

of the island. Speakers wishing to make such claims leveraged the variants' associations, and the social currency of the variant led to its increased use among them. Others, less interested in making such social statements, exhibited more of the lowered variant. And, as Eckert (2008) points out, the significance of centralized /ay/ presumably shifted over time, accumulating new associations with each use, changing in meaning and therefore in utility with the concurrently shifting socio-ideological landscape of the island.

So it goes with language use, variation, and change more generally. Every component of language has the potential to bear significance, and the significance of a given linguistic unit—and the motivations for using it—is based in part on its associations from previous uses. Different individuals, having different goals and occupying different places in the social world, likewise have varying degrees of use for a given variant. Moreover, given that associations between form and meaning are based on when, where, how, and by whom the form was used in the past, with each new use the significance of the form—and correspondingly, its utility—is open to change. This view of the dynamics underlying language variation and change forms the basis of third wave, meaning-based variation studies, which Eckert (2012) characterizes as follows:

The principal move in the third wave then was from a view of variation as a reflection of social identities and categories to the linguistic practice in which speakers place themselves in the social landscape through stylistic practice [...] Whereas the first two waves viewed the meaning of variation as incidental fallout from social space, the third wave views it as an essential feature of language.

Eckert (2012: 93–94)

Work in this spirit, whereby language variation and change are taken to be largely prompted by the social statements that variation and change make, has been gaining momentum over the last couple of decades, but is not entirely new. Indeed, as Eckert points out, Labov's (1963) study—aptly titled, “The social motivation of a sound change”—sits firmly within this perspective.

Indexicality

What I called associative meaning thus far is commonly referred to as *indexical* meaning in the tradition of sociolinguistics. The term takes its name from the work of Peirce (1955). Peirce outlines a three-way typology of sign-vehicles (forms that have significance). There are *icons*, which should bear some qualitative resemblance to the thing they signify—as a portrait to the person portrayed; *symbols*, which relate to the thing signified via convention or fiat—as in the case of “=” and the relation of equality; and *indexes*, which have “some existential or physical connection” to that thing which they signify (Atkin 2013: n.p.)—as smoke to fire. As far as its use in variationist literature is concerned, we may think of an index as something that suggests something else by association. Shouting, for instance, may be an index of a heightened emotional state, since the former often co-occurs with the latter, or centralized /ay/, at a certain point in time and space, with the authentic Vineyarder. The term *index* is also used as a verb, so that we may say that shouting can index a heightened emotional state, or that apical *-ing* can index, e.g., unpretentiousness (Campbell-Kibler 2007).¹⁰

A major push in the theorization of indexical linguistic meaning comes from Eckert (2008). According to Eckert (2008: 454), the meaning of (socio)linguistic variables corresponds to *indexical fields*, where an indexical field is, “[a] constellation of ideologically related meanings, any one of which can be activated in the situated use of [a variant of the] variable.” Using Campbell-Kibler’s (2007) work on the suffix *-ing*, as an example, Eckert notes that using the apical variant may contribute to a speaker coming off as some combination of relaxed, inarticulate, unpretentious, easygoing, lazy, or uneducated. The

¹⁰Some variationist studies of meaning have investigated whether certain form-meaning mappings are in some way iconic. This question is central to studies of *sound-symbolism* (Sapir 1929; Ohala 1994; Silverstein 1994; Eckert 2010), for instance. Of course, the full significance of the use of an icon, like that of a descriptively contentful lexical item, is surely tied to associations with prior uses of it, giving it indexical force as well.

interpretation of a given use depends on multiple contextual factors: “Which of the meanings in the indexical field the hearer will associate with a given occurrence will depend on both the perspective of the hearer and the style in which it is embedded—which includes not only the rest of the linguistic form of the utterance but the content of the utterance as well” (Eckert 2008: 466).

The ideologies of members of a speech community no doubt constitute part of the context of a given utterance, and Eckert (2008: 464) stresses that indexical fields are “inseparable from the ideological field [...]” The associations between a form and particular personalities, emotions, stances, social groups, etc. depend not only on experiential exposure to the form co-occurring with those particular traits and individuals, but also on the ideological links one draws between one set of traits and individuals and another. For instance, a token of a form *x* from an individual *y* may establish a link between *x* and some observable trait of *y*, but it may also establish a link between *x* and some other thing stereotypically related to that observable trait, establishing a chain of associations. Crucially, then, understanding the significance of a particular linguistic unit requires a commensurate understanding of the beliefs and ideologies of the individuals who use and interpret it. Labov’s (1963) interpretation of the speech patterns he observed on Martha’s Vineyard, for example, depended upon developing an understanding of the social and ideological landscape in which the speakers were operating—the history of the people of the island, their social organization, their relation to and views of the mainland U.S., and more.

In addition, as Eckert emphasizes, indexical fields are pliable and dynamic. That is, as discussed relative to the Martha’s Vineyard study, the use of a variant of a linguistic variable both draws on an existing indexical field and has the potential to change that indexical field. Future uses then draw on that new indexical field and any contemporaneous social and ideological shifts, and so on.

In brief, from this perspective, meaning is mutable, multiplex and deeply dependent on context—where context includes not only the local particulars of the situation of use, but

also the broader social and ideological landscape.

The scope of meaning-oriented sociolinguistic research

Variationist research from this “third wave” perspective has proceeded swiftly in the last couple of decades, and covered a wide variety of variables including the phonetic realization of consonants (e.g., Benor 2001; Podesva 2004; Zimman 2011) and the English morpheme *-ing* (Campbell-Kibler 2007), the use of non-modal phonation (e.g., Podesva 2007; Grivicic and Nilep 2004), expressive pitch contours (Moon 2010), and so on. Research along these lines has also branched further into non-phonological variables, such as tag-questions (Moore and Podesva 2009), discourse markers (e.g., Cheshire 2005; Acton 2011), and content words (e.g., Kiesling 2004).

Despite the expansion in the range of forms and expressions under investigation, the bulk of the work in this area has remained in the phonological realm, whether segmental or suprasegmental. This is understandable, given the predominately phonological focus of sociolinguistics historically. Moreover, related to the discussion in Section 1.2.2, it does seem, intuitively speaking, that in certain areas of the phonological realm there is more room for making social statements than one would generally find in, say, the lexical domain. For example, insofar as differences in the realization of a given phoneme do not lead to differences in entailed, descriptive content, a speaker can, within certain limits, afford to pronounce the phoneme according to the social effects she wishes to produce, without having to worry about altering the entailments of her utterance. In contrast, in many cases a given word will not have any perfect or even near-perfect synonyms as far as entailed, descriptive content is concerned, so that opting for an alternative form in order to exploit its social significance means changing the entailments of the relevant utterance.

Furthermore, on the face of things, it might seem that words bearing entailed, descriptive content—particularly highly frequent function words—would resist having potent socio-indexical meanings. The argument would go something like this. A word like *not/n't*

is such a crucial functional element that it is to be found across a wide array of situations and contexts, used by all sorts of speakers with a similarly wide array of intentions. How then, could it develop an especially strong association with any one social message?

As a matter of fact, however, even the most frequent function words are subject to indexicality and can be socially significant. Potts (2011), for instance, demonstrates a clear relationship between the use of *not/n't* and expressing negative affect, which he ties to interactional patterns that tend to accompany the use of negation. Different determiners, too, tend to correlate with correspondingly different social and expressive meanings, as I will discuss in the remaining chapters of this work.

The point here is this: we should expect social significance to show up at all levels of language—from phonemes to words to perhaps even entire discourses—and we should not be intimidated by the challenges of attempting to hold certain factors fixed in investigating non-phonological variables. Moreover, as argued in Section 1.2.2, one cannot reasonably hope to find distinct variants with perfectly identical meanings in any case. Rather, we should forge ahead, and simply make our best efforts to be clear about what we are attempting to hold fixed, as in any study of behavior.

1.2.4 Section summary

Sociolinguistics generally concerns the relationship between language and the social world. Historically speaking, the study of sociolinguistics has involved looking at language variation and change via particular social categories. A theme spanning the history of the discipline and picking up steam in recent decades is the idea that variation and change in the use of a particular form are importantly related to the form's meaning and the differential inclination of various members of a speech community at various times to use it to make social statements. Out of this productive approach has emerged a view of social meaning as context-dependent, socially and ideologically embedded, and ever in flux. But much work

remains to be done, particularly in the area of non-phonological variables.

Having now surveyed the foundation for a framework that connects semantics and pragmatics to sociolinguistics—with an eye toward the study of the social significance of English determiners—I now offer the following blueprint for the framework itself.

1.3 The framework

As outlined in Section 1.1, despite the many insights offered by semantic and pragmatic research, these fields have to date left certain aspects of the full picture of meaning in language under-explored or under-recognized—among them: meaning absent mutual recognition of intention, associative (indexical) meaning, and the broad range of social and ideological considerations that influence use and interpretation. At the same time, while meaning-centered approaches to sociolinguistics have greatly enriched our understanding of language variation and change, a disproportionate share of research conducted from this perspective focuses on variables that, at least ostensibly, involve fixed descriptive content.

Attempting to study social meaning and variation at the level of words and phrases presents a challenge for both enterprises. On one hand, it is inseparable from social and ideological concerns and opens the door to associative content, making it a stretch for work in the traditional vein of semantics and pragmatics; and, on the other, it typically involves the consideration of variants with different descriptive meanings. In this section, I will present a socio-pragmatic framework equipped to tackle such problems and general enough to accommodate a much broader range of phenomena concerning meaning, variation, and change.

1.3.1 Fundamental principles

In this section I present a handful of principles needed to get the framework pursued herein off the ground.¹¹ Most if not all of these principles already play an important role in both pragmatics and meaning-based approaches to sociolinguistics as historically practiced, and have been observed in one form or another by others working in these fields. In any case, they are worth being explicitly stated here.

Goal-orientation

The first basic principle is that language users speak in service of their goals. By “goal,” I simply mean an outcome that a person, consciously or not, directs her behavior toward. Goals can be wide ranging, from encouraging friendship to offending someone to relaxing to staying upright on a bicycle. Importantly, goals of talking include the “exchange of information,” but are not limited to that alone, as noted by Firth (1966); Romaine (1984); Keller (1994); Traugott (2011); and many others. Keller (1994: 92), for instance, goes so far as to say that: “Language has a multitude of functions, and if one should be stressed, it is the function of influencing others, to which ‘mutual understanding’ is subordinated.” Micro and macro social goals cited by Keller include “[obtaining] influence, affection, food, power, attention; being understood, being read, being accepted, having a mate, and such like” (84).

That language use is goal-oriented is a view clearly active in analyses of conversational implicature, which are built around the notion of making choices relative to one’s communicative intent. Meaning-centered sociolinguistic research rests on this view as well, arguing, for example, that, “speakers exploit linguistic variability in a systematic way to add a layer of social meaning” and “place themselves in the social landscape through stylistic practice” (Eckert 2012: 88, 94). Silverstein’s (2010) work, too, operates from some notion

¹¹If it turns out that these principles may be formulated more concisely with the same degree of transparency, I will consider that a happy outcome.

of speaker-goals, as evidenced by his claim that, “people’s usage is indexically calibrated to context” (344).

Eager, context-sensitive reasoning and interpretation

The second key principle is that language users eagerly seek explanations for and formulate interpretations of what they observe, and appeal to reason and context in doing so. That language users are eager interpreters is built into neo-Gricean approaches to pragmatics, where we find maxims like Levinson’s (1983: 146–47) Principle of Informativeness: “Read as much into an utterance as is consistent with what you know about the world” (also cited in Horn 1984). The principle is likewise exemplified, with characteristic elegance, by Winnie-the-Pooh, who looks for meaning even in the ostensibly incidental sound of bees buzzing:

That buzzing-noise means something. You don’t get a buzzing-noise like that, just buzzing and buzzing, without somebody meaning something.

Milne (1926). *Winnie-the-Pooh*.

Importantly, there is of course variation across individuals and contexts in the extent to which an utterance will be “read into.” Nonetheless, I hold that, across individuals and contexts, language users, to some nontrivial extent, are eager interpreters and do rely on reason and context in formulating their interpretations. Were this not the case, conversational implicature—which relies very transparently on context, reason, and interpreting beyond the literal—surely could not exist. Moreover, attempts to use language for communicative stylistic practice would fall on deaf ears, which runs afoul of meaning-based approaches to sociolinguistics.

Context-sensitive expectations

The third principle is that language users have context-sensitive expectations about what makes for a normal and/or appropriate utterance on a given occasion of use. This principle is at the heart of Grice's (1975) maxims and cooperative principle. His maxims, written as directives, can be understood as specifying general expectations for utterances: that they will be suitably informative, relevant, truthful, brief, and transparent. Indeed, Grice makes as much clear in discussing the applicability of his maxims for non-linguistic purposes: "I expect your contribution to be neither more nor less than is required [...] I expect your contributions to be genuine and not spurious [...]" (47).

A crucial point for our purposes, mentioned earlier in this chapter, is that brevity, clarity, relevance, truth, and informativity are not always in force to the same degree from one situation to the next, nor do they always receive the same weighting with respect to each other (see also, e.g., Horn 1984; Levinson 2000). Equally important (and also mentioned earlier) is the fact that Grice's original maxims do not cover all of the considerations that determine whether a particular utterance would be regarded as (ab)normal in a given situation. As displayed in the first epigraph of this chapter, repeated below, Grice himself acknowledged this fact from the very beginning:

There are, of course, all sorts of other maxims (aesthetic, social, or moral in character) [...] I have stated my maxims as if [the chief purpose of conversation] were a maximally effective exchange of information; this specification is, of course, too narrow, and the scheme needs to be generalized [...]

Grice (1975: 47)

Others, too, have noted the centrality of other kinds of expectation in language use and interpretation—such as expectations of politeness and distinctiveness (Brown and Levinson 1987; Keller 1994; Davis 2010; Traugott 2011).

Summary

The basic principles underlying the present framework are these: (i) speakers speak in service of their goals; (ii) language users are eager interpreters, drawing on context and reason; and (iii) language users have expectations about what constitutes a normal or appropriate utterance on a given occasion of use, and these expectations are sensitive to context. All of these principles are foundational to pragmatics and meaning-based sociolinguistics in general.

I will now present four additional principles concerning interpretation and use that build upon those discussed above. These principles are the centerpiece of the present framework.

1.3.2 Principles of interpretation and use

Content as both associations and entailments

AE Principle: The content of a given linguistic unit (i.e., its meaning abstracting away from context) includes both its entailments and its non-entailed associations (i.e., its indexicality).^{12,13}

This principle is necessary if we are to place meaning in the tradition of semantics and pragmatics under the same umbrella as the indexical meaning of meaning-based sociolinguistics, which takes meaningful associations as its starting point. But the principle ought to be adopted in any case—as discussed in Section 1.1.3. In using a given linguistic unit, a speaker not only takes on its entailments, but also the associations it bears, even if she is not committing herself to them in the same way. In the lexical domain, for instance, associations are crucial for explaining how distinct terms with the same entailed content have different communicative force, such as *backside* and *derrière* (see (11) above.) Phrases like *the gays* also illustrate the point at hand; as I will discuss in Chapter 2, *the gays* has

¹²The principles developed in this section are assigned two-letter acronym names for ease of reference.

¹³One might rightly point out that entailed content is also associated/indexical content, just associated/indexical content that is entailed. I've kept the two separate though, in order to avoid confusion: in practice *associated/indexical* is typically used to talk about what is associated/indexical but not entailed.

at present a negative force that, while not entailed, is also more robust than could be explained based on reasoning over entailed content alone. Otherwise, we would expect other combinations of *the* + NP to bear the same widely recognized, relatively high degree of derogation, but this is not the case—consider, for example, *the Californians*. Instead, the negativity of the phrase depends in part on its having been used frequently in statements of othering and marginalization.

The full significance of utterances

FS Principle: The full significance of an utterance *u* (or portion thereof) depends importantly upon:

1. context (details of the situation, expectations, ideologies, beliefs of discourse participants, etc.); and
2. what is distinctive about *u* (or portion thereof) relative to a contextually relevant set of other utterances (or portions thereof) with shared functionality.

FS.1 is intended to capture the essential role of context in use and interpretation, where context includes not only local specifics of the speech situation and its participants, but also expectations for the utterance and the broader ideologies and social structures in which an utterance is embedded. For more on the role of context, see Section 1.1–1.2. FS.2 underscores the importance of considering what is distinctive about a given utterance in understanding its full communicative force. An utterance’s distinctiveness can come from its form or its content (or both)—where, as stated in the AE Principle, an utterance’s content includes not only its entailments but also its associations.

Of course, something can be distinctive only with respect to some comparison class. The notion of interpreting a linguistic unit relative to some comparison class comes straight from Grice (1975). Conversational implicature involves understanding what is said in light

of what many have called “pragmatic alternatives” or “pragmatic competitors.” The derivation of the implicature in our blind date scenario, for instance, in part consisted of comparing the speaker’s actual utterance to other possible utterances that could have served as answers to the question posed. The envelopes of variation in sociolinguistic variationist studies are comparison classes of this sort, too—one understands the full import of a particular variant vis-à-vis other variants serving a similar function. In studies at the level of the phoneme, for instance, the implicit shared function is often simply the role of being a realization of the relevant phoneme.

The central idea is that the full significance of an utterance depends upon its relation to other potential utterances. It is worth emphasizing that the comparison class for a given utterance-type varies across contexts. Expectations for the discourse, discourse participants’ beliefs about each other, and a host of other contextual factors constrain the relevant set of alternatives.

Differential importance of different alternatives

DI Principle: Different alternatives have differential importance in understanding the full significance of a given utterance. The importance of a given alternative varies directly with how well it squares with conversational expectations and how closely related it is to the actual utterance both conceptually and in terms of form, content, function, and (relatedly) distribution.

The idea here is that not all alternatives are of equal importance in interpretation. Rather, alternatives that square especially well with conversational expectations and are especially closely related to the actual utterance are especially likely to play an important role in the interpretation the utterance receives. Consider the following statement, said as the beginning of a response to the prompt, *Tell us a little bit about yourself*. Here, I focus on the importance of the degree of relatedness between a given alternative and the form actually used, but, as stated above, expectations matter as well; if an unused alternative strongly clashes with conversational expectations—i.e., if it is highly unexpected—it is also highly

unlikely to be considered and, in turn, highly unlikely to figure into the interpretation of the actual utterance.

(12) Well, let's see. I love college football. And...

For the sake of discussion, let's hold fixed everything but the object of the verb *love*, so that the comparison class is built around *college football*. There will of course be variation in the comparison class of *college football* from context to context and person to person. But, at least for most U.S. sports fans, particularly relevant alternatives are phrases corresponding to close alternatives to college football, such as *pro football* or *college basketball*. Such alternatives are close to *college football* in that they occupy similar places in the conceptual domain. Relatedly, conversations about U.S. sports not infrequently involve comparing the merits of college football versus pro football or college football versus college basketball. Thus one might (but, of course, need not), make a Gricean inference from (12) that the speaker not only loves college football, but prefers it over, say, professional football. That is, singling out college football in particular might suggest special allegiance to it over professional football. The ready availability of such an inference is due to the relatively close competition in which the alternatives *college football* and *pro football* stand.

Less likely are inferences that involve things less closely related to college football. One is generally less likely to infer from (12) that, for instance, the speaker prefers college football over ice cream—the two are not as closely related conceptually, and it seems almost certain that the terms *college football* and *ice cream* share less overlap in distribution than *college football* and *pro football* do. Thus, even though *I love ice cream* is a plausible opener for a soliloquy of self-description, it competes less closely with *I love college football* than does *I love pro football* (again, at least for most U.S. sports fans)—thus the inference that the speaker prefers college football to ice cream is less likely to be drawn than a similar inference concerning college and professional football.

A corollary of the DI Principle is that the relevant set of alternatives and their respective degrees of importance are determined relative not to a given “slot” alone, but, crucially, to

the form actually used. In the present example, for instance, the weighted set of alternatives is not just a set of likely ways to fill in the blank in a statement of the form *I love* _____. Instead, the set of alternatives centers around the form *college football*. Had the speaker instead said, “I love ice cream,” we would be working from a different set of alternatives (e.g., *cake, frozen yogurt, . . .*) with different degrees of importance.

Violations of expectations

VE Principle: When an utterance violates (or, if taken at face value, would violate) a hearer’s expectations for what a normal or appropriate utterance would have looked like in the context, the hearer is likely to attach special significance to the utterance. Conversely, an utterance lining up with such expectations is relatively unlikely to be interpreted as having special significance.

The VE Principle is akin to the proposition that people don’t violate conversational expectations for no good reason. This is another principle clearly inspired by and central to Grice’s notion of conversational implicature: by his definition, conversational implicatures come about in situations where one or more of his maxims is violated or appears to be violated. With respect to the blind date example in Section 1.1.2, the Gricean analysis was that the response “He’s really nice!” made for at least an apparent violation of the maxim of Relation and arguably the maxim of Quantity given the question posed, leading to the non-entailed inference that the “he” in question was not particularly good looking.

Horn’s (1984) neo-Gricean framework outlines a principle similar to the VE Principle, which he calls the *division of pragmatic labor* (DPL), whereby marked utterances get marked meanings:

The division of pragmatic labor

The use of a marked (relatively complex and/or prolix) expression when a corresponding unmarked (simpler, less ‘effortful’) alternate expression is available tends to be interpreted as conveying a marked message (one which the unmarked alternative would not or could not have conveyed).

Horn (1984: 22)

Horn's concise statement of DPL covers less ground than the VE Principle, for in its glosses for *marked* and *unmarked* it focuses on notions of complexity and effort. On my view, this formulation sells Horn's (1984) key insight short.¹⁴ Markedness is crucial here, but marked does not always mean simpler or less effortful. For instance, if the more "effortful" form of a particular variable is the expected form in a given context—consider *I'ma* versus *I'm going to* in a formal setting—then by the VE Principle, use of that form over a less effortful alternative is *ceteris paribus* more likely to convey a "marked message," contrary to fact. (Horn's derivation of DPL is more transparently consistent with the VE Principle; there he speaks of a "marked expression E" as one "containing 'extra' material (or [being] otherwise less basic in form or distribution)" (Horn 1984: 22).)

Levinson (2000: 38) presents a principle (or, more precisely a heuristic) consonant with the VE Principle, as well: "The M heuristic: What's said in an abnormal way isn't normal." Levinson (2000: 38) ties this heuristic "directly to Grice's maxim of Manner ('Be perspicuous'), specifically to his first submaxim 'avoid obscurity of expression' and his fourth 'avoid prolixity,'" and to Horn (1984)—again focusing on brevity and clarity. My claim, however, is that the same general principle applies even where "abnormal" does not necessarily mean effortful or wordy.

Sociolinguistic research on indexicality also supports the VE Principle. Reviewing the literature on /t/ release (e.g., Bucholtz 2001), Eckert (2008) notes that studies of this phenomenon find pronounced social significance when /t/ is released in environments where release is phonologically unexpected. Similarly, Zhang's (2005) work on the tone of unstressed syllables in Beijing Mandarin reveals that the social meaning of full tone in such environments is due in part to its clash with the traditional local dialect.

Importantly, the VE Principle only takes us so far: it tells us where to expect to find special significance, but not what that significance will be. According to the FS Principle, the significance will depend upon what is distinctive about the utterance in question and

¹⁴The same goes, I would argue, for his calling his *R principle* a "principle of least effort."

upon features of the context, including both local particulars of the speech situation and the broader social and ideological landscape.

Summary

I have introduced four principles concerning language use and interpretation, all in service of the broader goal of linking semantics and pragmatics to sociolinguistics and moving toward a theory that captures the breadth and diversity of meaning in natural language. The principles—which form the backbone of the present sociopragmatic framework—are, in essence: that an utterance’s content includes both entailments and non-entailed associations; that the significance of an utterance depends upon context and what makes the utterance distinctive in the context relative to plausible alternative utterances; that the importance of a given alternative in determining the significance of an utterance is a function of its relatedness to the actual utterance and of how well it accords with conversational expectations; and that an utterance is particularly likely to have special significance where it violates conversational expectations.

To these principles and those in Section 1.3.1, I add simply that language users generally construct and interpret utterances in a way consistent with the belief that the aforementioned principles hold. In other words, in speaking and interpreting language, people act as though others have communicative goals, are eager, context-sensitive, reason-based interpreters, take entailed and associative content into account, etc.¹⁵ This is not to say that all meaning is intended (let alone the matter of intention recognition). Nor am I claiming that language users can perfectly predict the impact or intent of a given utterance, or that any of the principles discussed above are consciously accessed by language users with any regularity. Rather, the claim is simply that language users’ behavior generally squares with their

¹⁵This principle brings up issues related to the theory of mind (e.g., Premack and Woodruff 1978; Perner 1991; Wechsler 2010). There are certainly important questions to be asked as regards variation across speakers in the ability to consider the cognition of others and the effects of such variation on language use and interpretation. Unfortunately, there is not space to give these questions their due herein.

believing that the principles above are true—that they generally treat their interlocutors as eager interpreters, as having communicative goals, as having conversational expectations, and so on. Indexicality and stylistic practice could hardly be a reasonable explanation for language variation and change if, for instance, speakers did not believe that others ascribe significance to their uses of particular variants. Moreover, a principle of this kind is at the center of Gricean studies of meaning, which, among other things, define meaning in part in terms of an addressee's recognition of a speaker's intention.

The picture I have developed in this section thus far is both pragmatic and sociolinguistic—foregrounding context, reasoning, and the social. It retains Grice's insights concerning the evaluation of utterances relative to context, expectations (i.e., maxims), and alternative utterances, but extends their reach—widening the domain of conversational expectations beyond considerations of informativity, truth, relevance, clarity, and efficiency; incorporating associative meaning; relaxing the requirements of intentionality and mutual recognition thereof; and underscoring the role of context and ideology. These moves are essential steps toward capturing the full range of meaning-related phenomena in natural language. I will now show how the present approach applies to the example from the start of this chapter: John McCain's *that one*.

1.3.3 An example of meaning in action: McCain's *that one*

As stated at the outset, John McCain's reference to Barack Obama as "that one" in a 2008 presidential debate generated no small measure of controversy. Here I offer an explanation based in the principles of interpretation and use discussed above.

Let's begin by considering the context. McCain's utterance was issued in a nationally televised, presidential debate. Being a debate, the discourse is oppositional by nature. And despite its somewhat casual "town hall" style, the format was still to be highly structured and, relative to other discourses, rather formal. Moving beyond considerations of genre,

it is also important to note the larger social issues surrounding this particular debate. Of particular relevance are the social differences between Obama and McCain—Obama being the first black nominee for president of the United States from a major political party, and McCain being an older, white, long-time politician.

These contextual considerations (and there are surely others) serve as the basic matrix within which utterances from the debate were interpreted. How do they bear on McCain's use of *that one*? For one thing, at least in U.S. politics, the social conventions for referring to one's opponent in a formal debate typically center around a few options: proper names (with or without titles), gendered pronouns, and a few stock expressions like *my opponent*. McCain's use of *that one* is surely a rarity, and runs counter to expectations based on these social conventions. Recall Obama strategist David Axelrod's assessment in (1a), which plays up the violation of expectations: "Senator Obama has a name. You'd expect your opponent to use that name." Thus, the VE Principle—in essence, people don't violate conversational expectations for no good reason—predicts that special significance would be ascribed to McCain's utterance, and indeed it was.

The VE Principle does not, however tell us what the special significance will be. For this, we appeal to the FS Principle. This principle tells us that the full significance of McCain's utterance will depend in large part on what makes his utterance distinctive relative to a contextually relevant comparison class whose members share some important function with his actual utterance. Clearly one of the functions of McCain's utterance was to pick out Barack Obama, which provides some bounds for an appropriate comparison class. It would be misleading to identify a particular set of alternatives as *the* comparison class for McCain's utterance—among other things, the set is sure to vary depending on who is doing the interpreting. Instead, let's consider what a reasonable comparison class might look like, based on a few expressions that McCain might likely have used instead. The pronoun *he/him* is a good candidate, as are *Obama*, *Senator Obama*, and *Barack Obama*—all expressions used with high frequency in the task of referring to Obama. We might also

include *that guy*, which bears the same deictic force as McCain's actual utterance, and perhaps *my opponent*, and, say, *this one*. There are of course other options, and some of them are no doubt virtually ruled out by context, which includes things like beliefs about McCain, genre-based constraints, and the like (it seems extremely unlikely that McCain would have referred to Obama in the debate as "his highness" or "Senator Meanie," for instance.)

(13) presents our hypothetical comparison class:

(13) Hypothetical comparison class for McCain's use of *that one*:

he/him, Obama, Senator Obama, Barack Obama, my opponent, that guy, this one, that one

The question at hand is what makes *that one* distinctive relative to the other expressions in (13). For one thing, with the exception of *this one*, it is the furthest removed from an acknowledgment of Obama's personhood. Lexical entailments and associations dictate that anything called *he/him, senator, my opponent, or that guy* is nearly always human or a personified entity. Obama's given name and surname, as such, are also clearly connected with his personhood via associations and conventions of reference. *That one*, on the other hand, has no clear connection with personhood whatsoever. Indeed, the noun *one* is about as generic as any as regards the type of thing being talked about.

A second distinguishing characteristic of *that one* is that, with the exception of *that guy*, it is the only member of the comparison class to include the demonstrative *that*. Of particular importance in this case is *that's* close competition with the proximal demonstrative *this*, as in *this one*, lending it currency in expressing distance from the thing being talked about.

In brief, *that one* is by far the least associated with personhood among the expressions in (13) (with the exception of the equally personhood-less *this one*), and one of only two with the distance-related demonstrative *that*. Thus, the entailments and associations of McCain's choice of referring term, whether intentionally or not, present Obama as distant from McCain and downplay his personhood relative to likely alternatives. In accordance with the FS Principle, these distinctive features—together with an ideological link between distance

and differentiation—are central to the unfavorable interpretations that McCain’s utterance received, which labeled *that one* as, e.g., “dehumanizing” (see (1b)) and “Othering.”¹⁶

It is worth noting, also, that many hypothetically possible inferences were *not* drawn. For instance, no one protested that McCain’s term downplayed the fact that Obama was a senator from Illinois, even though McCain could reasonably have referred to Obama as, for example, “the gentleman from Illinois/the Land of Lincoln.” Two key factors likely prevented such a concern. First, a term like *the gentleman from Illinois* was almost certainly not a particularly relevant member of the set of alternatives to *that one* for most people, if it was a member of the set at all. It’s not particularly frequent, it’s somewhat wordy, and, unlike the alternatives in (13), highlights a special feature of Obama that is not especially germane to the discourse at hand. Thus, according to the DI Principle, it was unlikely to receive much weight in interpretations of McCain’s utterance. Second, (to underscore the importance of context) Obama hailing from Illinois does not connect in any transparent way to the hot-button social issues surrounding the presidential contest, such as age and race, making it a less salient matter in the context to begin with.

Of course, the precise inferences a hearer might have drawn (or not drawn) from McCain’s utterance depend upon her prior beliefs, what was and wasn’t salient for her, and so on. As discussed relative to (10), for instance, some ascribed to McCain a view of Obama as “an annoying child,” others made a strong link to issues of race and ethnicity, and still others concluded that any strong social meaning was “probably [...] off hand (read: unintentional)” (see (10a)). This diversity of interpretations is possible due to the thoroughgoing context-sensitivity of interpretation, which allows for differences in expectations, salience, comparison classes, beliefs, and ideologies from one person or situation to the next. And because McCain’s *that one* neither entails nor explicitly states any particular socially loaded belief on McCain’s part, attributions of significance can be denied with some degree of plausibility. At the same time, however, the present framework leads

¹⁶Dowd, Maureen. “Mud Pies for ‘That One’.” *The New York Times*. 7 October 2008.

to principled predictions. It explains why people might read into McCain's utterance, and why the kinds inferences drawn were what they were—having their source in contextual considerations and the distinguishing characteristics of McCain's utterance relative to functionally related alternatives.

1.3.4 Applying the framework more generally

This same kind of analysis can be equally well applied to more canonical sociolinguistic variables, like the realization of the English suffix *-ing*. The interpretation of a given token of *-ing* depends crucially upon the distinctive characteristics of the variant used relative to other possible variants (FS Principle), based in large part on associative (indexical) content (AE Principle)—e.g., associations of relaxedness, easygoingness, lack of education, etc. for the apical variant, versus formality, education, etc. for the velar variant (Campbell-Kibler 2007). And the degree of significance ascribed to the variant used will depend on whether or not it aligns with contextually determined conversational expectations—for example, the use of an apical variant by an educated Northerner can signal condescension (Campbell-Kibler 2007). Furthermore, and importantly, while the interpretation will reliably relate to the distinguishing characteristics of the relevant variant, the precise character of the interpretation depends heavily on features of the context, including ambient ideologies and the interpreter's beliefs about the speaker and the nature of the interaction.

By the same token, Gricean conversational implicature as traditionally defined may be viewed as a special case of the dynamics of interest herein, given that it concerns the ascription of non-entailed significance in cases where certain expectations (i.e., maxims) are or appear to be violated (VE Principle), and the significance relates crucially to the distinguishing characteristics of the utterance used (FS Principle). Analyses of scalar implicature, for instance, clearly follow this pattern. The standard account is that the interpretation of *good* as “good but not great/excellent” arises where the entailed content of *good* alone

would violate the maxim of Quantity (being perhaps under-informative), and has as its source the range on the scale of goodness that is unique to *good* relative to other positive terms in a relevant comparison class like *great* and *excellent*.

We are thus armed with a ready framework for tackling the meanings of interest in this thesis. Only one step remains for rounding the framework—namely, drawing an explicit connection between meaning on one hand and variation and change on the other.

1.3.5 Meaning, variation, and change

I take my cues here from both meaning-based approaches to sociolinguistics (e.g., Labov 1963; Silverstein 2003; Campbell-Kibler 2007; Eckert 2008) and pragmatic approaches to language change (e.g., Horn 1984; Traugott 1987, 1988, 2011; Keller 1994), whereby: “Change is not only internal but also external, driven by social factors and language users who are active participants in negotiation of linguistic patterning, especially meaning” (Traugott 2011: 549).

The basic picture

People speak in service of their goals (Section 1.3.1) and different expressions and forms, having different meanings, provide differentially useful means for attaining a given goal—whether that goal is fitting in socially, expressing a particular proposition, constructing a particular persona, or what have you. Given that different people have correspondingly different goals in correspondingly different situations, we see principled variation in the expressions and forms that people use. Consider *that one*, used to pick out a person. Given its relation to other person-denoting terms (Section 1.3.3), we should expect to find this term more often where a speaker wishes to distance herself from her intended referent than where she wishes to express kinship with the referent—all other things being equal. Similarly, given the indexical associations of apical *-ing*, we should expect to find it used

more often where a speaker seeks to come off as relaxed and unpretentious than in situations in which the speaker is going for formality (Campbell-Kibler 2007).

Now, as discussed at multiple points in Section 1.2, individual uses and patterns of use can create, strengthen, or weaken a linguistic unit's associations (e.g., Silverstein 2003). In the present framework, a change in associations is a change in meaning. Indeed, in some cases the associations of a particular linguistic unit can become so strong over time as to become entailments (Brown and Levinson 1987; Traugott 1988, 2011). Of course, as the meaning of a given linguistic unit changes, so, too, does its currency and utility (e.g., Eckert 2008). Changes in meaning, then, beget changes in who will use the form and in what situation. And on it goes.

A richer picture: The role of social structure and other factors

Nothing in the above picture presupposes that variation and change will happen along, or primarily along, demographic categories of class, gender, ethnicity, age. As far as the picture above is concerned, we should see variations according to such categories only insofar as people are differentially inclined toward expressing particular meanings along category lines. At the same time, however, the actual dynamics underlying language variation and change are more complex than is captured by the above picture. For one, not everyone has the same exposure to the same meaningful linguistic units. This means that not everyone has the same repertoire, nor does everyone share the same associations with a given linguistic unit. A speaker surely won't use a particular form to express a particular meaning if she doesn't know that she has the option to do so. Furthermore, as research on accommodation suggests (e.g., Giles et al. 1991), there are certainly pressures to talk like one's interlocutor (see also Keller 1994). So of course the way that society is structured—in this case, who people interact with and what they are exposed to—has a huge role to play, too. Thus, demographic categories (or any other way of carving up social space) can be instrumental in understanding variation and change. But even under this richer picture of variation and

change, this will only be true insofar as people of like categories (i) are similarly inclined toward making certain kinds of statements; and/or (ii) occupy a similar place in social space, thereby being more likely to have common ground and to experience pressure to talk alike.

Still other factors play a role in language change and variation, such as ease of articulation and information utility (e.g., Cohen Priva 2008) and metaphor (e.g., Heine and Claudi 1986; Traugott 1988). In addition, as Traugott (2011: 565) notes, in some cases language change is even mandated.

The upshot

Nonetheless, it should be clear how and why meaning plays a crucial role in understanding language variation and change. Differential meanings are of differential utility in differential contexts, and with each new use meanings change, feeding back into the same dynamics. This is especially relevant for our purposes herein, for it means that, to the extent to which we understand the social world and the meanings of particular forms and expressions, we should be able to make predictions about who will use a given form in what circumstances. Conversely, observations concerning who uses what form when provide insight into the meaning of that form.

1.3.6 Section summary

In summary, I am adopting a view of human language whereby language users are goal-oriented, eager interpreters who draw on context and reason in formulating and interpreting utterances and who have expectations for what constitutes a normal or appropriate utterance in a given context. Building on this view and on previous work in pragmatics and sociolinguistics, I presented four principles of interpretation and use that are at the center of the

present work. In brief, they are: (i) that the content of a given form includes both its associations and its entailments (AE Principle); (ii) that the full significance of a given utterance u (or part thereof) depends on context and what distinguishes u from other, functionally related utterances (FS Principle); (iii) that different functionally related alternatives are of differential importance in interpreting the relevant utterance, based on their relatedness to that utterance and how well they accord with conversational expectations (DI Principle); and (iv) that an utterance is particularly likely to receive special significance where it violates conversational expectations, and vice versa (VE Principle). These principles explain the McCain example and a much broader range of phenomena, and will be put to work in the case studies to follow. Finally, following the lead of Labov (1963); Horn (1984); Keller (1994); Silverstein (2003); Campbell-Kibler (2007); Eckert (2008); Traugott (2011) and others, I have also drawn an explicit connection between meaning, variation and change, whereby a form's meaning affects who uses it when, and vice versa. Such a view makes predictions about patterns of use, and will be applied to the case studies explored in this work.

Taken together, these moves constitute a deliberate push toward bridging the work of semantics and pragmatics with that of sociolinguistics, as encouraged in one way or another by Grice (1975); Romaine (1984); Cheshire (2005); Eckert (2011) and others.

1.4 What's to come

In what follows, I will apply the framework developed in this chapter to two case studies of social meaning among lexical items—specifically, concerning the claims that: (i) using *the* with a plural noun phrase to talk about a group of people tends to depict the group as a monolith of which the speaker is not a part, and to an extent that using a bare plural for this purpose does not; and (ii) demonstratives are useful tools for expressing exclamation and evaluativity (e.g., Lakoff 1974; Bowdle and Ward 1995; Wolter 2006; Davis and Potts 2010;

Potts and Schwarz 2010) and for promoting a sense of shared perspective and experience between interlocutors (e.g., Lakoff 1974; Chen 1990; Wolter 2006; Acton and Potts 2014). The rest of this work proceeds as follows.

In Chapter 2, I will introduce the social meaning of interest pertaining to *the*, and explain its underlying dynamics using the socio-pragmatic framework developed in this chapter. Next, in Chapter 3, I will present two new studies of variation in the use of *the* that provide evidence for and enrich our understanding of this purported social meaning and that support a meaning-based view of variation. In Chapter 4, I turn to demonstratives. There, I provide an in-depth examination of the social meanings associated with demonstratives cited above. I develop a detailed picture of demonstratives' content and—again, using the framework developed in this chapter—explain why demonstratives have the social meanings that they have and account for the claims and findings of previous research on the matter.

Chapter 2

The and nonmembership: Deriving the meaning

In this chapter, using the framework developed in Chapter 1, I will explain why the use of *the* with a plural NP ((plural) *the*-DP) to talk about a group of individuals tends to depict that group as a monolith of which the speaker is not a part, and, in particular, to an extent that the use of a bare plural (BP) does not. The analysis depends on two crucial features of the content of BPs and *the*-DPs and their relation to each other—specifically: (i) that, whereas BPs typically abstract away from particulars, *the*-DPs are concerned with picking out particular, well-defined groups of individuals—thereby drawing lines in the domain of discourse and foregrounding questions of who is and is not part of the group in question; and (ii) that *the*-DPs stand in closer competition with first-person forms than do BPs. After introducing the effect, I then turn to a discussion of the entailed content of the relevant expressions, upon which the derivation of the effect, the centerpiece of this chapter, will be based. I will conclude the chapter with a discussion of how the inference of speaker nonmembership in the relevant group relates to inferences concerning social distance and derogation. In addition to introducing and explaining the social meaning of interest, this chapter sets the stage for variationist studies in the use of *the*-DPs and BPs, the subject of

Chapter 3.

2.1 The speaker-nonmembership effect

2.1.1 A vignette

Consider the following scenario. Suppose a handful of conference attendees are having a conversation at a restaurant in Paris, and that the nationality of one of the attendees, Jones, is unknown to the rest of his dining party. It's clear enough from Jones's accent that he's from the U.S. or Canada, but that's as far as anyone at the table can tell. Partway through the meal, Bauer, a German, explains that on a recent visit to the States she was astonished by how many people owned multiple automobiles, to which Jones replies as in (1). (Assume that the interlocutors interpret the NP *Americans* as pertaining to citizens of the U.S., rather than having its more inclusive sense.)

(1) The Americans do love cars!

This utterance, with the definite article, sends a strong signal that Jones is not a U.S. citizen. It sounds as though Jones is talking about a group of individuals from an outsider's perspective. In contrast, the sentence in (2) is less likely to suggest that Jones is not an American himself. (2), relative to (1), could more naturally be continued with, "And I must confess that I am no exception!"

(2) Americans do love cars!

Let's take a look at a few more examples to get a better feel for the effect.

2.1.2 More examples

The title of a 1958 photo-logue of American life, and the reactions it received, provide a sharp illustration of the social meaning of interest. The work is *The Americans*, a collection of pictures taken by Swiss-born photographer Robert Frank, who immigrated into the

United States in 1947. When his book first appeared over a decade later, Frank and his work were widely criticized in the U.S. According to a National Public Radio report on the collection, “It was initially dismissed as the jaundiced work of an unpatriotic cynic who kept company with the similarly subversive and ragtag Beats.”¹ Frank’s title—translated literally from an earlier edition published in France titled *Les Américains*—with its removed, outsider tone (compare with *Americans*) quite probably played a role. According to arts critic Richard B. Woodward:

What was most upsetting [to early critics] about Mr. Frank’s take [...] was, first of all, the provocative title. It is as though the people in his pages were an alien species and he a more evolved anthropologist.

Woodward (2009: n.p.)

Though Woodward does not draw attention to the presence of *the per se*, he is clear that the title suggests that the photographer viewed his subjects as other, as a sort of specimen. The title of a 2009 exhibition of Frank’s work at the National Gallery of Art—“Looking In: Robert Frank’s ‘The American’s’”—further depicts Frank as an outsider observing a different kind of people.

Additional evidence of the speaker-nonmembership effect of *the* can be found in its use in disparaging generalizations, discourse on marginalization, descriptions of social oppositions, and explicit statements of speaker nonmembership. Examples abound:

(3) **Livia:** They sent you to a psychiatrist?

Anthony, Jr.: Uh-huh.

Livia: But that’s crazy. That’s all nonsense. That’s nothing but a racket for *the Jews!*²

¹McAlley, John. “Frank’s ‘Americans,’ still revelatory after 50 years.” *National Public Radio*. 13 February 2009. Last accessed 14 April 2004. www.npr.org/2009/02/13/100673221/franks-americans-still-revelatory-after-50-years.

²Down the neck. *The Sopranos*. Home Box Office.

- (4) “I have every part of the gay gene except for the desire to sleep with men,” he said. “But I’m glad *the gays* want me to be one of them.”³
- (5) “And I just ask some of you that are back on the East Coast, come down to the border and talk to those of us that have seen what happens when *the politicians* play politics with something that ends up costing people’s lives down here on the border.”⁴
- (6) Faced with the prospect of a war against all, humans reformulate the conflict into a war of nearly all against a few—against *the Jews* or *the communists* or *the gays* or *the feminists* or *the Mexican immigrants*.⁵
- (7) Due to an embarrassing indent in his chest, he never took his shirt off during P.E., giving *the jocks* more ammo to attack him.⁶
- (8) The Cohens note comments they hear such as: “Why are *the blacks* angry? Why is there such a sense of rage? I’m not responsible. [...] As for slavery: That’s 300 years ago. We’ve had 30 years of affirmative action—everything is equal now.”⁷

In each example, the relevant groups are depicted as separate, removed, or opposed. But what underlies this effect?

2.1.3 Why this effect?

Given that this social meaning is relatively robust—a claim I will support quantitatively in Chapter 3—the question is why. In keeping with the framework of Chapter 1, I argue that this meaning may be traced to the relation between *the*-DPs, first-person forms, and BPs, together with conversational expectations and other contextual factors. I will now provide an account of this social meaning, beginning with an overview of the content of

³Murphy, Tim. “The man who made workouts cool.” *New York Times*. 28 April 2011. From the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA; Davies 2008-).

⁴Republicans backed into a corner; Alleged spy spills Chinese secrets to U.S.; A win for Sandusky? *Erin Burnett OutFront*. CNN. 15 June 2012. From COCA (Davies, 2008-).

⁵Placher, William C. “How does Jesus save?” *Christian Century*. 2 June 2009. From COCA (Davies, 2008-).

⁶Ames, Mark. “CSI: Columbine: *Going Postal* argues that Columbine High School was a crime scene long before Klebold and Harris finally lost it.” *The Chicago Sun-Times*. 16 October 2005. From COCA (Davies, 2008-).

⁷Chaddock, Gail Russell. “Washington ‘power couple’ takes on race.” *The Christian Science Monitor*. 24 July 2008. From COCA (Davies, 2008-).

the expressions of interest.

2.2 The content of *the*, BPs, and related expressions

Recall that under the FS principle of Section 1.3.2 the full significance of an expression in a given use depends crucially upon what sets it apart from other expressions that could have served a similar function in the context. Thus, in order to understand the social significance of *the* and its relation to BPs, we need to examine both their content and the content of related expressions. This is the work of this section. Our envelope of variation will be expressions that may be used to make statements that are effectively about (roughly) the same plurality of individuals. For our purposes, that will mean examining *the*-DPs, personal pronouns, demonstratives, proper names, and bare plurals (and conjunctions thereof). With respect to (1) for example, this could include expressions like: *Americans; the Americans; we; we Americans; me and my countrymen; my fellow Americans and I*; etc.⁸

Now, in contrast to the foci of many other sociolinguistic studies—for example, the realization of certain phonemes—*the* and its kin very clearly bear entailed descriptive content. And while entailed descriptive content plays at most a secondary role in many instances of social meaning, in the present case, such content serves as the very germ for the social

⁸One could argue that DP's headed by *all* and *every* should be included as well, as in (i)

- (i) [A asks B her opinion of the automotive industry. B replies]
- a. Well, all Americans love cars!
 - b. Well, every American loves cars!
 - c. Well, the Americans love cars!

I must leave such expressions aside due to limitations of space. For the time being, I submit provisionally that these expressions are, like BPs, relatively unlikely to invite an inference of speaker nonmembership in the group being talked about. Being quantificational, these expressions do not inherently pick out a particular collective of individuals as a bloc, and hence do not carve up the domain of discourse in the same way as *the*-DPs, nor, I suspect, do they stand in as close a competition with first-person forms.

Reference to “taxonomic” kinds via a definite, singular expression (Dayal 2004), as in using *the rhinoceros* to talk about the rhinoceros-kind rather than a particular rhinoceros, is also worth exploring in future work. See footnote 11.

meaning of interest. Of course, associative content is an important part of the picture as well, as the broader discussion of this chapter and the next will suggest. Furthermore, while content is the starting place for the social meaning of interest, it is only part of the story. As I will explain in Section 2.3, expectations and other contextual factors, too, have a vital role, in keeping with the FS, DI, and VE Principles of Section 1.3.2.

A preview

I will begin with those expressions that are always or at least typically used as *definites*. By “definite” I mean an expression whose content, where defined, together with the relevant interlocutors’ shared context, definitively identifies a particular (object-level) entity or collection of entities (cf. Birner and Ward 1994; Abbott 2008; *inter alia*.)^{9,10} This includes DPs headed by *the*, but also demonstrative phrases, proper names, and pronouns. I will then turn to bare plurals and their various interpretations. For the purposes of this chapter and the next, the main expressions of interest will be *the*-DPs, bare plurals, and first-person pronouns. However, demonstratives are the focus of Chapter 4, and the comprehensive overview of the content of the broader range of expressions provided herein sets the stage for future research into the meaning-related consequences of the relationships in which they stand with each other.

One additional note on the scope of this section. My purpose is to identify what it is about the content of the expressions of interest that distinguishes them from each other. Details concerning scope and other matters related to the syntax-semantics interface are not of immediate relevance herein. For more on those phenomena, see, e.g., Chierchia (1998); Dayal (2004); Wolter (2006) and Elbourne (2008, 2013).

⁹I will not be concerned with taxonomic kinds (Dayal 2004) in this work. See footnote 11.

¹⁰See, e.g., Birner and Ward (1994) for a discussion of cases in which definite descriptions seem not to “uniquely identify” a referent.

2.2.1 Notes on the semantic framework

Generally following the approaches of Wolter (2006) and Elbourne (2008, 2013) to *the* and pronouns (though see Section 2.2.10) I will work within a situation-semantics framework herein, whereby situations are parts of possible worlds (Kratzer 1989), consisting of “one or more individuals having one or more properties or standing in one or more relations at a particular spatiotemporal location” (Elbourne 2008: 410–411).

The entailed content of the expressions of interest involves two principal types of entity: object-level individuals in the count domain and kind-level individuals (kinds). I assume that the count domain of object-level individuals is divided into singular entities, i.e., *atoms*, and individuals that consist of collections (*sums*) of those atoms, i.e., plural individuals (Link 1983). For example, a proper name like *Jan* would correspond to an atomic individual—namely, the individual Jan—whereas the conjunction of proper names *Jan and Dean* would correspond to the plural individual consisting of the sum of the atomic individuals Jan and Dean taken together. The object-level count domain of individuals, both singular and plural, is partially ordered by a relation Π , which, in the usual sense, we can think of as a sort of subset relation, so that $a \Pi b$ if and only if every atom comprising a is also part of b . Given a set of individuals S , the maximum individual of S , where such an individual exists, is the member x of S such that for any other member y of S , $y \Pi x$.

Because we will be dealing with bare plurals, our ontology includes kinds as well (Carlson 1977; Chierchia 1998; Dayal 2004; Farkas and de Swart 2007). For our purposes, the exact makeup of kinds is of little importance. What matters for us is that, unlike object-level individuals, kinds correspond to types of things, rather than the things themselves.¹¹ For instance, the BP *dogs* in (9) is typically analyzed as referring to a kind—the predicate

¹¹In this work, I will only discuss kinds that correspond to BPs, as in (9). I must leave a proper socio-pragmatic analysis of the more narrowly distributed “taxonomic” kind (Dayal 2004) for future research (see also Farkas and de Swart 2007 on “atomic” kinds.) Reference to such kinds (typically associated in English with singular definites, as in, “The mastadon once roamed North America”) is subject to some distinctive constraints (Dayal 2004)—among them, resistance to predication involving accidental rather than essential properties of instantiations of the relevant kind. The examples in (i) illustrate.

applies not to individual dogs but to the species as a whole.

(9) Dogs are not extinct.

Henceforth, for expository convenience, reference to “individuals” may be assumed to be reference to object-level individuals rather than to kind-level individuals, unless otherwise specified.

2.2.2 The entailed content of *the*

In this section, I will present a characterization of the content of *the*, focusing for now on entailed content. The characterization is based on the work of Wolter (2006), Elbourne (2008), and Elbourne (2013), for whom an *t*-operator is built into the denotation of *the*. For an alternative account, see Coppock and Beaver (2012), for whom *the* does not at its core include an *t*-operator, but combines with one in argument position. This distinction is unimportant for our purposes—assume that all the claims in this section are restricted to *the*-DPs in argument positions.

In essence, the work of *the* is to pick out particular individuals in a given situation. More specifically, *the*, when combined with a sister NP, denotes a function that takes a given situation *s* as its input and returns (i) the unique individual satisfying the property denoted by the NP in *s* if the property is singular; or (ii) the maximum individual whose constituent parts satisfy that property in *s* if the property is plural. In either case, if no such individual exists in *s*, the denotation of the *the*-DP will be undefined for *s*. In this way, *the* bears uniqueness and existence presuppositions, in line with Strawson (1950) and Abbott

(i) a. Rutgers professors seem to be born on weekdays. (Dayal 2004 (70a))

b. #The Rutgers professor seems to be born on a weekday. (Dayal 2004 (70b); judgment in original)

Related to this constraint, reference to taxonomic kinds is (as the name suggests) highly associated with scientific discourse about biological species and the like. Not surprisingly, then, talking about individuals of any type as a taxonomic kind is highly likely to present such individuals as a phenomenon of scientific interest (regardless of whether the speaker instantiates the kind) and to present the predication as essential. In talk about humans, such usage borders on comical:

(ii) The American (a most curious creature) loves cars.

(2008).

To make this concrete, *the dog* denotes a function that maps a given situation s to the unique dog in s if there is one, and is otherwise undefined in s . Example (10a), it seems, is felicitous only if there is one and only one dog in the situation being described, and true only if that dog hasn't been walked yet. *The dogs* picks out the maximum individual consisting of dogs in s —i.e., the collection of all dogs in s —if such an individual exists, and is otherwise undefined for s .

- (10) a. The dog hasn't been walked yet.
 b. The dogs haven't been walked yet.

If we assume that singular properties correspond only to atomic individuals, then the denotation of *the*-DPs can be stated via a single generalization (Sharvy 1980). In particular, we can simply say that given a situation s , DPs headed by *the*, where defined, pick out the maximum individual satisfying the relevant property in s . I've already stated as much for cases where the property is not singular, as in (10b). To see how this delivers the desired result for singulars, consider again (10a). Being singular, the denotation of *dog* corresponds to atomic individuals, and, crucially, a set of atoms has a maximum member only if it has only one member. Thus, *the dog* is felicitous only if there is only one dog in the relevant situation, and, where felicitous, delivers that dog.

Following Elbourne (2013) and many others, we can capture the essence of *the* via an ι operator. I assume properties are of type $\langle e, \langle s, t \rangle \rangle$ (abbreviated $\langle e, st \rangle$), mapping individuals to propositions (type $\langle s, t \rangle$), which in turn map situations to truth-values.

- (11) For any situation s and one-place predicate f , $\iota x f(x)(s)$ is the maximum individual in s such that $f(x)(s) = T$ if such an individual exists, and is otherwise undefined.

The entailed, descriptive content of *the*, then, can be represented as in (12), where the variable f , corresponding to a property, is to be saturated by the denotation of a sister NP.

$$(12) \quad \llbracket \text{the} \rrbracket = \lambda f_{\langle e, st \rangle} . \lambda s . \iota x . (f(x)(s))$$

In prose, (12) says that, in terms of entailed, descriptive content, *the* corresponds to a

function that maps a property f (to be supplied by a sister NP) to a function that, given a situation s , (i) returns the maximum individual satisfying the property f in s if there is such an individual; and (ii) is otherwise undefined. Put another way, *the*, when combined with a property-denoting NP, takes a situation s as its input and returns exactly the maximum individual (singular or plural) satisfying the relevant property in s where such an individual exists, and is otherwise undefined for s . Accordingly, *the*-DPs provide a well-defined way of picking out particular individuals in a situation, in virtue of some property that they share. There are, of course, other ways of picking out particular individuals—among them, pronominal forms, to which I now turn.

2.2.3 The entailed content of third-person pronouns

Following Elbourne (2008, 2013), I take it that third-person pronouns, at the DP-level, differ only minimally from *the*-DPs: whereas the latter pick out particular individuals based on an explicitly stated property (stated via a constituent NP), the former do so based on a contextually determined property.¹² Thus, at the DP-level, *they*, for instance, picks out the maximum individual satisfying some particular, contextually determined property in a given situation, where such an individual exists. Below the level of the DP, then, *they* is a determiner of sorts, which has as its sister a node corresponding to the contextually determined property, rather than an explicit NP. Indeed, on Elbourne's (2013) account, other than ϕ -features, *the* and third-person pronouns have identical entailed descriptive content. Example (13) provides a denotation for *they*:

$$(13) \quad \llbracket \text{they} \rrbracket = \lambda f_{\langle e, \text{st} \rangle} . \lambda s . \lambda x . (f(x)(s))$$

where f is a contextually determined property

In prose, (13) says that *they* denotes a function that, given a contextually determined property f and a situation s , returns the maximum individual in s that satisfies the f , modulo

¹²For an account based on salience, see, e.g., Roberts 2002; and Wolter 2006.

definedness. This denotation is identical to that of *the*, except for the stipulation that the relevant property be contextually determined. The property may be determined based on an antecedent—as in, “Your parents called. They said. . .,” where the property of interest is that of being a parent of the addressee—or any of a number of other contextual factors.

As in many accounts, the entailed content of other third-person pronouns differs from that of *they* only in terms of gender, animacy, and number. The entailed content of *she*, for instance, can be represented as in (17), which is identical to *they* except that it includes the predicates *atom*, *female*, and *anim*, which require that the interpretation, if well-defined, will be singular, female, and animate:

(14) For all individuals x and situations s , $atom(x)(s)$ iff x is an atom in s

(15) For all individuals x and situations s , $female(x)(s)$ iff x is female in s .

(16) For all individuals x and situations s , $anim(x)(s)$ iff for all y such that $atom(y)(s)$ and $y \neq x$, y is animate in s

(17) $\llbracket she \rrbracket = \lambda f_{\langle e, st \rangle} . \lambda s . \lambda x . (f(x)(s) \ \& \ atom(x)(s) \ \& \ female(x)(s) \ \& \ anim(x)(s))$

where f is a contextually determined property

At the level of the DP, then, *she*, for a given situation s , returns the unique animate female satisfying the relevant contextually determined property in s if such an individual exists, and is otherwise undefined. A parallel denotation may be given for *he*, with the only difference being the substitution of the *female* predicate with a similar *male* predicate (barring purportedly genderless uses of *he*). Similarly, the denotation of *it* would be the same as that for *she*, minus the gender and animacy feature.¹³

¹³One might propose that *it*, rather than having no gender feature, has a neuter gender feature. However, there are many cases in which one would use *it* without committing oneself to the referent being genderless. Such is often the case in talk about infants:

(i) That baby over there is adorable! Do you think it’s a boy or a girl?

In the same vein, I recently heard someone make the following statement at a social gathering, to which Smith had brought her three similar-looking children.

(ii) If you see a small blond person running around, it probably belongs to Smith.

To summarize, the third-person pronouns *she*, *he*, *it*, and *they* operate much like *the* in that they combine with a property to form a function that, where defined, maps a given situation *s* to a particular individual—namely the maximum (and thereby unique) individual satisfying the property (and whatever relevant gender, animacy, and number features) in *s*. The principal difference between *the* and these pronouns is simply that whereas the former gets this property from a sister NP, for the latter, the property is contextually determined.

2.2.4 The entailed content of demonstratives

Demonstratives will not play a starring role in this chapter or the next, so I will keep the commentary here relatively brief. I will go into the nature of demonstratives in much greater detail in Chapter 4. There, I will more fully motivate the moves made in this section.

According to most contemporary theories of the content of demonstratives and *the* (including the present one) the former are considered to be, in a sense, a special case of the latter (Lyons 1977; Roberts 2002; Wolter 2006; Elbourne 2008). Both pick out the unique (i.e., maximum) individual in a given situation such that certain requirements are met (modulo definedness), but for demonstratives the set of requirements is richer and more complex than for *the*. On the present theory, loosely speaking, demonstratives differ from *the* in that they identify their referent not only via a property supplied by a sister NP, but also via a contextually determined entity—i.e., *index* (Nunberg 1993; Elbourne 2008)¹⁴—located in a contextually determined search space (Wolter 2006). As in Wolter (2006), the “proximals” *this* and *these* differ from *that* and *those* simply in that the former require that their index be suitably proximal (more precisely, on my account, suitably accessible) to the speaker.

For the formally inclined, this can be captured in (18)–(20). I will leave the predicate *accessible* unanalyzed for the time being. I use the *C* term in (20) as a shorthand for the contextual parameters that, in addition to the index *x*, serve as arguments to *accessible*. The relevant set of contextual parameters, and the details of the predicate *accessible* are

¹⁴For more on this sense of the word *index*, see Section 2.2.6

provided in Section 4.2.4 and Section 4.2.5.

(18) For all individuals x and situations s , $in(x, s)$ iff x is an individual in s .

(19) $\llbracket \text{that} \rrbracket = \lambda f_{\langle e, \text{st} \rangle} . \lambda s . \iota x \left(f(x)(s) \ \& \ g(y)(x)(s) \ \& \ atom(x)(s) \ \& \ in(y, s^*) \right)$

where y is the contextually determined index of the demonstrative, g (type $\langle e, \langle e, \text{st} \rangle \rangle$) is the contextually determined relation that is to hold between y and the ultimate interpretation, and s^* is the contextually determined search space.

(20) $\llbracket \text{this} \rrbracket^C = \lambda f_{\langle e, \text{st} \rangle} . \lambda s . \iota x \left(f(x)(s) \ \& \ g(y)(x)(s) \ \& \ atom(x)(s) \ \& \ in(y, s^*) \ \& \right.$
 $\left. accessible(y, C) \right)$

where C is the context of utterance, y is the contextually determined index of the demonstrative, g (type $\langle e, \langle e, \text{st} \rangle \rangle$) is the contextually determined relation that is to hold between y and the ultimate interpretation, and s^* is the contextually determined search space.

(21) $\llbracket \text{the} \rrbracket = \lambda f_{\langle e, \text{st} \rangle} . \lambda s . \iota x . (f(x)(s))$

These formulae may look daunting, but, in fact, as promised, they are actually just like the denotation for *the* (repeated here as (21)), with the addition of a few extra requirements in the scope of the ι -operator. All three denotations make a provision for a property supplied by a sister NP via their f term. But the denotations for *that* and *this* further involve an index and require that their index be located in a particular, contextually determined search space s^* , and that their atomic referent (since the expressions are singular) stand in a contextually relevant relation to the index. *This* has the additional requirement that the index be suitably accessible to the speaker in the context of utterance, which distinguishes it from *that*.

2.2.5 The entailed content of proper names

I will have relatively little to say on proper names, but I include them here for completeness. Following Geurts (1997), I take singular proper names, on their canonical uses, to be

definites of a sort. That is, I take it that a given proper name X , used to pick out a person or other individual (rather than to talk about the name *per se*), denotes at the DP-level a function that maps a given situation s to the unique (i.e., maximal) individual called X in s , subject to the same presuppositions as *the*. This account can be formalized as in (22).

(22) For any singular proper name X :

$$\llbracket X \rrbracket = \lambda s. \iota x. (x \text{ is called } X \text{ in } s \ \& \ atom(x, s))$$

See Geurts (1997) for a full justification of such an approach.

Of course, proper names can be pluralized, as in (23a), or combined with determiners, as in (23b)–(23c):

- (23) a. How many Marks do you have in your class?
 b. A Keisha Johnson called for you this morning.
 c. You must be the Juan that Ann has been talking so much about.

Such examples suggest that a proper name X can be interpreted simply as the property of being called X . From this it seems that, in the most general terms, proper names are best analyzed as basically denoting properties—so that on their canonical, determiner-less uses their DP-level interpretation arises via the application of a sort of ι -operator. I must leave a full treatment of this idea for future work.

2.2.6 The entailed content of first-person forms

First-person and second-person forms are different from all the other expressions discussed thus far in that they revolve around the agents (typically, speakers) and addressees of speech acts.¹⁵ As a solid first approximation, the first-person pronoun I maps a given situation to

¹⁵The account of first- and second-person forms that follows does not attempt to address what Perry (1979) called, “the problem of the essential indexical.” I take it for granted herein that we are dealing with contexts in which speech participants know how to use and interpret first- and second-person pronouns (a minimal assumption) and know who the speaker and addressee(s) of a given utterance are. The latter knowledge presumably applies in most cases, though of course there is confusion at times as to who is and isn’t an addressee (an issue for any full account of speech-participant terms). Under these assumptions, the issue of essential indexicality may be left aside for this work. See Wechsler (2010) for an insightful analysis of

the agent of the speech act, and *we* maps a given situation to some contextually determined plural individual that has the agent as one of its constituent parts and whose constituent atoms are all animate.

These approximations are true to the canonical uses of first-person pronouns. Nunberg (1993), however, points out some exceptions, like the following:

- (24) a. *Condemned prisoner*: I am traditionally allowed to order whatever I like for my last meal. (Nunberg 1993 (32))
 b. *President*: The Founders invested me with sole responsibility for appointing Supreme Court Justices. (Nunberg 1993 (33))

One reading of (24a) (perhaps the most likely) is that the speaker is citing prandial traditions built not around her *per se* but rather around condemned prisoners more generally. Similarly, one may take (24b) to mean that certain responsibilities belong to the president, whoever that may be, rather than to the speaker *per se* (after all, the “Founders” certainly could not have known the identity of all future presidents). The broader point is that first-person pronouns don’t always pick out the speaker, but can also denote via properties instantiated by the speaker, thus motivating a slightly more complex formulation than our first approximation.

To account for the fuller range of data, Nunberg (1993) advocates for an approach to first-person pronouns whereby the agent of the relevant speech act is the *index*, but not necessarily the ultimate interpretation, of the pronoun. This use of the term *index* should not be confused with its use in the sociolinguistic literature, though the two are fundamentally related. The idea behind the present use of the term is that the agent of the speech act points, so to speak, to the ultimate interpretation. In particular, speaking in the most general terms, the agent of a first-person pronoun use stands in for some contextually relevant property that the agent instantiates in the speech act situation; and, in turn, for any given situation *s*, the pronoun ultimately picks out the maximum individual satisfying that property in *s*,

 personal pronouns that takes this issue into account.

modulo definedness.

By default, the relevant property is simply that of being identical to the agent in the case of *I*; or that of being identical to some contextually relevant plural individual that the agent is a part of in the case of *we*. Nunberg (1993) himself stresses that these are the default interpretations. Discussing the examples in (25), for instance, Nunberg claims that (25a) has a “referential” reading—true if the speaker’s actual team could have won—and an “attributive” reading—true if the speaker could have belonged to the winning team, whoever the other members of that team might have been, but that the second only allows a referential reading.

- (25) a. My team could have been the winners. (Nunberg 1993 (8))
 b. We could have been the winners. (Nunberg 1993 (9))

While I would argue that an attributive reading is not entirely unavailable for (25b), it seems clear that the referential reading—i.e., the reading tied to the individuals comprising the speaker’s team in the actual world—is far more likely. At the same time, the Nunbergian account allows for the property of interest to have a more interesting value in certain special cases, like being a condemned prisoner, as in (24a), or being president, as in (24b).

(26) and (27) present denotations for *I* and *we*, respectively, based on the foregoing discussion.

$$(26) \quad \llbracket I \rrbracket = \lambda s. \iota x (g(x)(s) \ \& \ atom(x)(s) \ \& \ anim(x)(s) \ \& \ g(a)(s_u))$$

where *a* is the agent of the relevant speech act, *g* (type $\langle e, st \rangle$) is the contextually determined property that is to hold of the ultimate interpretation, and *s_u* is the speech act situation.

$$(27) \quad \llbracket we \rrbracket = \lambda s. \iota x (g(x)(s) \ \& \ anim(x)(s) \ \& \ g(a)(s_u))$$

where *a* is the agent of the relevant speech act, *g* (type $\langle e, st \rangle$) is the contextually determined property that is to hold of the ultimate interpretation, and *s_u* is the speech act situation.

The only difference between the denotations given for *I* and *we* is that the former bears the predicate *atom*, to ensure that the ultimate interpretation of the pronoun is a singular

individual, rather than a plurality. Let's see how (26) works relative to a canonical use of *I*, where the agent of the speech act *a* intends to say something about herself *qua* herself. In the scenario of interest, the property *g* would take on its default value, namely the property of being *a*:

$$(28) \quad g \rightarrow \lambda y. \lambda s. y = a$$

The $g(a)(s_u)$ term requires that the property *g* holds of *a* in the speech act situation. In this case, this is the requirement that *a* be identical to *a* in s_u , which is trivially the case. Thus, the interpretation of *I* of interest in this scenario would be the function that, where defined, maps a given situation *s* to the unique individual in *s* that is a singular, animate individual identical to *a* in *s*. This further reduces to the function mapping situations to *a*—the default understanding of *I*.

What about cases where the intended interpretation of the first-person pronoun is something different, as in (24b)? A derivation would go something like this. Here, the contextually determined property is something like the property of being a president of the U.S., a property which *a* holds in s_u . The resulting interpretation, then, would be roughly the individual concept mapping any given situation *s* to the unique singular, animate individual who is president of the U.S. in *s*, modulo definedness. That is, (24b) would end up being interpreted as roughly equivalent to (29), as desired.

(29) The Founders invested the president with sole responsibility for appointing Supreme Court Justices.

As for (27), again, this denotation differs from the one for *I* in (26) only in that it lacks the *atom* feature. This treatment accounts for the generalization that *we* has associative semantics (Nunberg 1993; Wechsler 2010; *inter alia*)—that is, *we* does not mean '(the) speakers,' but, something closer to, as Nunberg (1993: 7) puts it, “the [contextually relevant] group of people instantiated by the speaker or speakers of the utterance.” Accordingly, the restriction on *g* does not require that *g* is the property of being a speech act agent; rather it requires only that the agent instantiate the property given by *g*. In this

way, *g* may take on multiple different values depending on the situation, all consistent with different uses of *we*:

- (30) a. [Speaker *a* to addressee *b*]
 Shall we dance? $g \approx \text{being } a \oplus b$
- b. [Speaker *a* to addressee *b* talking about self and best friend *c*]
 We try to talk on the phone at least once a month. $g \approx \text{being } a \oplus c$
- c. [Speaker *a*, male, to a colleague in a boardroom full of men]
 In a couple years we'll probably all be women.
 $g \approx \text{being member(s) of the relevant companies' board}$
 (Nunberg 1993: fn. 20, originally attributed to William Hamilton)

Example (30c) presents a case analogous to (24b): here, *we* is probably intended to say something not about the current members of the board, but about the members of the board in the future, whoever they may be. (Of course, the present denotation for *we* could account for the other interpretation as well.)

It is worth noting that *we* occasionally has a sister NP, as in (31). Such uses can be straightforwardly accounted for; we need only adjust the denotation in (27) to include a additional property argument, as in (32). Analogous to Elbourne's (2008) account of demonstratives, let's assume that for purely pronominal uses, the value of the property argument *f* simply amounts to the property of being an entity.

(31) We three kings of orient are.

(32) $\llbracket \text{we} \rrbracket$, revised:

$$\llbracket \text{we} \rrbracket = \lambda f_{\langle e, \text{st} \rangle} . \lambda s . \iota x (f(x)(s) \ \& \ g(x)(s) \ \& \ \text{anim}(x)(s) \ \& \ g(a)(s_u))$$

where *a* is the agent of the relevant speech act, *g* (type $\langle e, \text{st} \rangle$) is the contextually determined property that is to hold of the ultimate interpretation, and *s_u* is the speech act situation.

To summarize, first-person pronouns pick out the maximum individual in a given situation that has some contextually determined property borne by the speech act agent in the speech act situation. By default, and in the majority of cases, this property is the property

of being a particular individual of which the agent is a part. And for I , this boils down to the property of being the speech act agent.

2.2.7 The entailed content of second-person forms

On the present account, the entailed content of second-person pronouns differs only minimally from that of first-person pronouns. The crucial differences are two. In the case of second-person pronouns: (i) the index is the plural sum, B , of the addressees of the speech act; and (ii) the contextually determined property must be instantiated either by B or by each of the atomic individuals comprising B in the speech act situation. Parallel to first-person pronouns, the default interpretation of *you* is some contextually determined individual of which each of the addressees is a part.

The denotation of *you* in its plural form is given in (33). The only difference in the case of the singular form is the addition of the *atom* feature. The function *ATOMS* maps individuals to the atomic individuals they consist of.

$$(33) \quad \llbracket \text{you}_{pl} \rrbracket = \lambda s. \iota z \left((g(z)(s) \ \& \ \text{anim}(z)(s) \ \& \right. \\ \left. (g(B)(s_u) \ \vee \ \forall b \in \text{ATOMS}(B)[g(b)(s_u)]) \right)$$

where B is the plural sum of addressees of the relevant speech act, g (type $\langle e, st \rangle$) is the contextually determined property that is to hold of the ultimate interpretation, and s_u is the speech act situation.

To see how (33) works, let's apply it to each of the following examples in turn.

(34) Daphne and Velma will come with me. Shaggy and Scooby, you go check out the terrifying crypt.

(35) [Game show announcer to a contestant]

... You and a guest will fly roundtrip to beautiful Rio de Janeiro, where you'll stay at the fabulous Hotel Rio!

(36) [Host of a variety show, pre-show, to the act that has just arrived: Donny and Marie]

Hey, wait a minute! You're supposed to be the Brady Bunch!

In (34), Shaggy and Scooby are the addressees of *you*, so the sum individual *S* comprised of the two of them serves as the index. Assuming that the speaker is issuing a directive to them alone, the relevant, contextually determined property could be being identical to *S*—a property trivially satisfied by *S* in the utterance situation. And since *S* is animate (or, more precisely, *S*'s constituent atoms are animate), the denotation of *you* in this example thus reduces to the function from situations to *S*, modulo definedness. As for (35), the *you*-token of interest is the second one. Here, the index is the sole addressee, the contestant. But this token of *you* seems to refer to the contestant and her guest of choice. The property of interest, then, could be something like that of being the contestant or the contestant's guest, which is clearly satisfied by the contestant in the utterance situation. And so on.

In (36), the interpretation of *you* of interest is something like 'the song-and-dance act for tonight.' The index is the plural individual *O* consisting of the two addressees, Donny and Marie, and the relevant property could be the property of being the song-and-dance act for the upcoming show—again, a property clearly held by the index *O* in the situation of utterance. The interpretation of this token of *you* therefore amounts to the function that, where defined, maps a given situation *s* to the (animate) song-and-dance act of the upcoming show in *s*.

In summary, the entailed content of second-person pronouns is essentially the same as the semantics for first-person pronouns, except that, in the case of the former, the index is always the sum individual comprised of the addressee(s), rather than the agent of the speech act, and it is this individual, or its constituent atoms, that must bear the contextually determined property in the speech act situation. By default, the interpretation will be either the addressee(s) *per se*, as in (34), or the addressee(s) and some contextually relevant associates, as in (35). In either case, the addressee(s) are part of the ultimate interpretation. At the same time, the denotation in (33) allows for the occasional case in which the addressees only instantiate the relevant property in the speech act situation, without actually being a part of the ultimate interpretation. Finally, note that, as with the denotation of *we*, (33) may

be analogously altered to accommodate scenarios in which *you* takes a sister NP, as in *you people*.

2.2.8 Interim summary

Thus far I have presented the entailed content of the definite uses of expressions that are always or typically used as definites—i.e., expressions that, together with context, definitively pick out particular (object-level) individuals. Table 2.1 provides a schematic representation of this content. As the table shows, *the* and proper names are set apart from the other expressions in that they do not necessarily incorporate a contextually determined property. *It/they* are the simplest semantically of the remaining expressions, with no features beyond the incorporation of a contextually determined property. Demonstratives stand out relative to *it/they* in that they all include an additional situation-based parameter that locates the index in a particular search space, with proximal demonstratives including an accessibility feature, as well. *She/he* differ from *it/they* in that they include an animacy feature and a gender feature. *I/we* also include an animacy feature (but no gender feature) and add the requirements that (i) the speech act agent serves as the index; and (ii) the index bears the relevant contextually determined property in the speech act situation (not depicted in the table, for simplicity). Finally, *you* is like *I/we* with the addressee(s) substituted in for the speech act agent.

Table 2.1 makes clear the relationships in which these expressions stand with each other in terms of entailed content. Thinking in terms of the FS principle, we can see potential for multiple emergent meanings arising from these contrasts. For instance, looking ahead, the analysis of the social meanings of demonstratives in Chapter 4 depends heavily on the features that separate demonstratives from the other expressions in the table—namely, the locating parameter and, in the case of *this*, the accessibility feature. For the purposes of this chapter in the next, the key contrast is between *the*-DPs and DPs containing first-person

	Contextually Determined Property	Locating Parameter	Accessibility Feature	Anim. Feature	Gender Feature	Agent as Index	Addressee(s) as Index
the + NP							
pr. names							
it/they	X						
that/those	X	X					
this/these	X	X	X				
she/he	X			X	X		
I/we	X			X		X	
you	X			X			X

Table 2.1: Semantic features of expressions with primarily definite uses.

forms. Importantly, only the latter necessarily introduces the agent of the speech act—in the vast majority of cases, the speaker—into the proposition, question, or imperative being expressed. In light of the principles discussed in Chapter 1, in this contrast we have the makings of an inference of speaker nonmembership in the group being picked out by the use of a *the*-DP, a matter on which I will have more to say in Section 2.3.

Recall, however, that the main question for this chapter is not only why *the*-DPs tend to invite an inference of speaker nonmembership, but also why they do so to a greater extent than bare plurals (BPs). To answer that question, we will want to look at the entailed content of BPs as well. The crucial difference between the two kinds of expression are that unlike *the*-DPs, BPs do not definitively pick out particular, object-level individuals. Put another way, they do not draw definitive dividing lines in the domain of discourse. In turn, they neither raise questions of who’s in or out of a particular group nor stand in competition with first-person forms to the extent that *the*-DPs do.

2.2.9 The entailed content of bare plurals

Bare plurals are somewhat complicated expressions in that they may be used in a variety of different ways with what seems to be a variety of meanings. Accordingly, when I talk about the “entailed content” of BPs herein, what I actually intend to address are their denotational contributions on each of their various types of use. There is indeed a lack of consensus as to what the proper treatment of these expressions is. I myself will not commit to a particular semantic theory of BPs. Instead, I will demonstrate that whatever their entailed content is, it is different from that of *the*-DPs. Most notably, BPs do not definitively pick out particular, object-level individuals.

In addition to their predicative uses (which are not of interest here since we are concerned with DP in argument positions only) English BPs have three other uses—kind-level, characterizing, and episodic— exemplified in (37)–(39).¹⁶

(37) Dogs aren’t extinct. *kind-level*

(38) Dogs bark when threatened. *characterizing*

¹⁶This inventory does not include “indexical” BPs (Carlson 1977; Dayal 2013)—roughly, those that include some contextually grounded expression—such as the BP *people in the next room* in (ia). Carlson (1977) and Dayal (2013) observe that indexical BPs have properties that distinguish them from “standard,” non-indexical BPs. But, importantly, like non-indexical BPs, indexical BPs behave differently from *the*-DPs. Consider the contrast in (i):

(i) a. Bill believes that people in the next room are about to leave. (Dayal 2013 (16a))

b. Bill believes that the people in the next room are about to leave.

In example (ib), *the people in the next room* provides a well defined mapping from situations to object-level individuals, picking out in a given situation *s* the maximum individual with the property of being people in the next room. In contrast, the indexical BP *people in the next room* in (ia) doesn’t provide a definitive mapping from situations to individuals, and we end up with an interpretation more akin to ‘some people in the next room.’

(39) Dogs are barking.

episodic
(Dayal 2013 (5c))

I will take each of these uses in turn.

Kind-level interpretations

As foreshadowed in Section 2.2.1, example (37) (introduced earlier as (9)) stands out from among all other examples considered thus far in that its main predicate, *extinct*, is a predicate that is said to apply to a special kind of entity—namely, kinds (Carlson 1977; *inter alia*). As Farkas and de Swart (2007: 1659) explain, predicates like *(be) extinct*, “do not apply to regular individuals like John and Fido, but only to species,” where the term *species* here is to be broadly construed, rather than having its narrow, scientific sense. The point is that such BPs pick out kinds of things, rather than the things themselves (object-level individuals).

According to Chierchia (1998) and Dayal (2004), the kind-level interpretation comes about by applying an operator to the property encoded by the bare plural. Let’s call this operator KIND, (cf. Chierchia’s 1998 ¹⁷). It is often emphasized that the operator is defined only for predicates that are intensional—that is, predicates such that there are at least two situations *s* and *s'* such that the extension of the predicate in *s* is different from its extension in *s'*. In other words, these are predicates whose extension can change from one situation to the next. This is meant to preclude the operator “from applying to predicates like *these old shoes* whose denotation is contextually anchored to particular entities, or counterparts thereof” (Dayal 2004: fn. 1).¹⁷ Going back to the example in (37), the application of this operator to the denotation of the NP *dogs* is licensed, since the set of dogs in a situation can differ from one situation to the next, and yields the dog-kind, which we can write as DOGS. This provides a suitable argument for the predicate denoted by the VP *aren’t extinct*, which applies not to object-level entities (e.g., Fido) but to kind-level entities. Importantly,

¹⁷For a related, alternative take on the intensionality of the relevant operator, see Dayal (2013).

nowhere in the denotation of the sentence does the BP contribute a particular, object-level individual (nor a function from situations to such individuals)

Characterizing sentences

What about sentences like (38)? Such sentences are called *characterizing* sentences because, as the name suggests, they characterize individuals that have a certain property. While these sentences still seem to say something about kinds in a certain sense, they differ from sentences like (37) in that their main predicate is not kind-level, but individual-level. In this case, barking is something that individual dogs, rather than the dog-kind, do. Example (38) might be paraphrased as something like ‘Typically, a given dog will bark when threatened’ (or, a bit more complexly, ‘Typically, in a situation involving a threatened dog, the dog will bark.’) Most accounts of such sentences involve an operator of genericity that quantifies over individuals or situations, so that the denotation of (38) looks something like (40), where GEN is the relevant operator (see, e.g., Papafragou 1996 for a discussion of the proper treatment of the generic operator):

$$(40) \quad \text{GEN}_{s,x} (x \text{ is a dog in } s \ \& \ x \text{ is threatened in } s) (x \text{ barks in } s)$$

(cf. Farkas and de Swart 2007)

Different accounts make different claims about how the term *dogs* makes its contribution to the truth-conditions of such sentences. On the standard account, the BP denotes a kind and then undergoes another operation that yields the property encoded by the BP, again with the presupposition that the property is an intensional one. For our purposes, let’s call that operator DEKIND (cf. Chierchia’s 1998^U). Thus, in slightly more formal terms, (40) would look like the representation in (41).

$$(41) \quad \text{GEN}_{s,x} (\text{DEKIND}(\text{DOG})(x)(s) \ \& \ \text{threatened}'(x)(s)) (\text{bark}'(x)(s))$$

Again, as with (37), the BP does not deal in particular, object-level entities, but, instead, merely furnishes a property. And the resulting statement involves abstract quantification.

Episodic uses

Example (39), repeated below as (42), presents yet another distinct use of BPs. In this case, the main predicate is apparently object-level but also episodic.

(42) Dogs are barking.

Rather than making some general claim about typical instantiations of the relevant kind/property, these statements describe a particular situation involving instantiations of the kind/property.

On most accounts of sentences like (42), one way or another the relevant BP ends up getting an indefinite—i.e., existential—reading, so that (42), for instance, is interpreted as being akin to (43) (read so that *some* is phonologically unstressed). More specifically, (42) is typically analyzed as conveying the proposition in (44) (with slight variations depending on the details of the framework).

(43) Some dogs are barking.

(44) $\lambda s \exists x [x \text{ is comprised of dogs in } s \text{ and } x \text{ is/are barking in } s]$

Different accounts arrive at this reading via different means (see, e.g., Chierchia 1998 and Krifka 2003.) In any case, as with (37) and (38), the relevant BP—unlike a *the*-DP—does not contribute a particular object-level individual or individual concept to the denotation of the sentence.

In addition to examples like (42), there are episodic uses of BPs that don't have the same kind of indefinite feel. (45) provides an example:

(45) Californians voted 3-to-1 in favor of the measure.

Like the one in (42), the main predicate in (45) is episodic and can certainly apply to object-level individuals:

(46) Tom, Dick, Harry, and I voted 3-to-1 in favor of the measure.

On the other hand, the addition of unstressed *some* to (45), as in (47), does not seem to provide as fitting a paraphrase as does (43) for (42):

(47) Some Californians voted 3-to-1 in favor of the measure.

Rather, the most natural interpretation of (45) seems to be something more like the following:

(48) Among Californians who voted, three out of four voted in favor of the measure.

A couple of different accounts have been offered for such uses. Krifka (2003: 198–199) discusses similar examples, and analyzes the relevant BPs as ultimately denoting kinds. In contrast, Dayal (2013), who offers a unified account of all episodic uses of BPs, claims, in essence, that a sentence of the form BP + Predicate is true of a situation s just in case the predicate holds of some representative subpart x of the plural sum y of all individuals that instantiate the relevant kind in some situation s' such that $s < s'$.

The bottom line for our purposes is that on neither account are BPs like the one in (45) analyzed as definites in the sense of definitively picking out particular object-level individuals. If such BPs pick out kinds, as on Krifka's (2003) account, then they certainly aren't definites in the relevant sense. And on Dayal's (2013) account, such BPs don't contribute definitive mappings from situations to object-level individuals either—rather, the truth-conditions of sentences involving such BPs are stated in terms of *some* representative part of *some* plural individual whose atomic constituents instantiate the relevant kind.

Taking all of this together, BPs in episodic sentences—whatever their semantics—are not definites in the relevant sense. They do not definitively pick out object-level individuals. We can see the relative lack of particularity associated with BPs very clearly in exchanges such as the following, where the respondent leverages this property to provide an evasive answer.

(49) **Parent:** And who is going to this party?

Recalcitrant Teenager: People!

Summary

To summarize, BPs in English are fundamentally different from definites. Unlike the latter, they do not pick out particular, object-level individuals, nor do they specify well defined functions from situations to such individuals. They simply do not deal in particulars or draw lines in the domain of discourse to the extent that definites do. Rather, BPs are less determinate and center around properties and their corresponding kinds.

In a moment, I will turn to the task of accounting for the social meaning of interest. But first, let's discuss the somewhat surprising fact that, in certain uses, plural pronouns and demonstratives behave quite like BPs.

2.2.10 Bare-plural-like uses of plural pronouns and demonstratives

Nunberg (1993) points out the often overlooked fact that pronouns, on certain uses, can have a BP-like interpretation. Consider the examples in (50b) and (51b), in which *we* is the subject of a characterizing statement and a kind-level predication, respectively. (Similar examples can be found for second-person pronouns.)

(50) a. Women are less likely to contract the disease than men are. (Nunberg 1993 (13))

b. We are less likely to contract the disease than men are. (Nunberg 1993 (12))

(51) a. Humans are dying out.

b. We are dying out. (Nunberg 1993 (14))

We can occur in episodic sentences with a BP-like interpretation, too:

(52) We [Quakers] made our first major migration to North America in the seventeenth century.

That pronouns can have BP-like readings is further evidenced by the fact that they readily serve as anaphors for BPs, as in (53).

- (53) a. Dogs aren't extinct, and hopefully they never will be.
 b. Dogs bark when threatened, but they are generally rather friendly as far as animals go.

And as pointed out by Bowdle and Ward (1995), demonstratives too can have BP-like readings, as in (54), where B is saying something not about particular Labradors, but Labradors in general.

- (54) **A:** My cousin just returned from Canada with an adorable Labrador retriever puppy.
B: Those Labradors are extremely loyal, you know. (Bowdle and Ward 1995 (7))

Indeed, all plural pronouns and demonstratives have the potential for BP-like readings. This suggests that perhaps the content of these expressions does not inherently include an *t*-operator, but instead basically corresponds to properties—or a function from properties to properties, to accommodate uses with sister NPs like *we three kings*—to which various operators may apply. The basic denotation of *we*, for instance, would then look something like this:

$$(55) \llbracket we \rrbracket = \lambda f_{\langle e, st \rangle} . \lambda x . \lambda s . (f(x)(s) \ \& \ g(x)(s) \ \& \ anim(x)(s) \ \& \ g(a)(s_u))$$

where *a* is the agent of the relevant speech act, *g* (type $\langle e, st \rangle$) is the contextually determined property that is to hold of the ultimate interpretation, and *s_u* is the speech act situation.

On this approach, *we* would denote a function that takes a property argument (the trivial property of being an entity if *we* has no overt sister NP) and returns the property of: having that property, having a particular, contextually determined property instantiated by the speech act agent, and being animate (or having only animate constituent atoms). This property could then serve as an argument to an operator with the same semantics as *the* to yield the default, definite interpretation, but also to KIND or other such operators.

The relative rarity of such uses

Whatever the proper semantic treatment may be, it is clear that plural pronouns and demonstratives do have BP-like uses. However, such uses, particularly when non-anaphoric, are rather rare, particularly when compared to these expressions' more canonical, definite uses. That such uses are relatively rare, or at least non-canonical, is evidenced by their having received little attention in the semantics literature. As Bowdle and Ward (1995: 32) observed, "Previous analyses of generics have focussed on three types of generic NPs: bare plural NPs, and singular NPs headed by either the indefinite or definite article," and little has changed in that regard since the time of their writing. Similarly, Nunberg (1993: 12), observes that on "standard accounts, [. . . declarative] utterances containing *we* must express singular propositions"—that is, *we* is generally treated as always denoting an individual. In addition, Bowdle and Ward's (1995) description of generic uses of demonstratives suggests that such uses are rather strictly constrained; the authors claim that they must pick out relatively homogenous kinds and generally involve evaluative predication.

The rarity of such uses of plural pronouns and demonstratives is to be expected. As discussed in Section 2.2.9, BPs do not pick out particular, object-level individuals, but are instead employed in statements about some or typical individuals with a particular, usually intensional, property or about the kind corresponding to such a property. Now, at least on first mention, the most straightforward way to get at a particular property/kind is to simply name it explicitly, and BPs do just that. On the other hand, plural pronouns and demonstratives used to pick out a property or corresponding kind without a sister NP, on a first use, raise the risk of confusion or miscommunication. And plural pronouns or demonstratives with a sister NP naming the property of interest on such uses run up against Gricean expectations of brevity of expression.

To illustrate, since among pronouns and demonstratives we are primarily concerned with first-person forms in this chapter and the next, consider again Nunberg's (1993) (51),

repeated and augmented below as (56).

- (56) a. Humans are dying out.
 b. We are dying out. (Nunberg 1993 (14))
 c. We humans are dying out.

Imagine (56b) said without having just recently talked about humans as such. Such an utterance would likely lead to a great deal of uncertainty on the part of the addressee as regards what the speaker was trying to communicate—running up against expectations of clarity of expression (as expressed, e.g., in Grice’s maxim of Manner). Who, she would likely wonder, are “we”? Nor would a gesture indicating other individuals be particularly helpful for delivering the property/kind of interest—if the speaker were to indicate other people in saying *we*, an addressee would likely try to piece together who was being talked about based on the distinctive characteristics shared by the speaker and the indicated individuals, or perhaps simply try to coerce a definite interpretation.

At the same time, (56c), said in the same context, would be marked in its own way. If the claim to be made in terms of asserted content is that humans are dying out, then the simpler (51a) would suffice. From the perspective of descriptive content, both *humans* and *we humans* would ultimately pick out the kind HUMAN, but the latter expression involves resolving a contextually determined property to be instantiated by the speaker, whereas the former simply delivers the property of being human without any of the extra work of coordination. Thus (56c) runs afoul of conversational expectations of simplicity of expression (Grice’s maxim of Manner); if, from the point of view of asserted content, the point is to say something about humankind, *we humans* has extraneous material. Now, of course, this is not to say that the use of *we humans* in such a case would be viewed as purposeless—indeed, according to the VE principle, the utterance would likely bear special significance. But this special significance would be due to the very fact that *we humans* is marked relative to *humans* in this case.

A subject-DP with a singular first-person form, as in (57), would not be particularly

helpful or effective relative to (56a), either.

(57) Jeff, Jesse, and I are dying out.

To the extent that such DPs allow for BP-like interpretations, it seems very unlikely that an addressee would arrive at HUMAN from *Jeff, Jesse, and I*, barring very special circumstances. More likely, an addressee would attempt to construct a kind based on some distinguishing property shared by Jeff, Jesse, and the speaker—why name those particular individuals explicitly if they didn't have an important contribution to make to the interpretation?

Thus, the rarity of non-anaphoric, BP-like uses of pronouns and demonstratives stands to reason. After all, even BP-like uses of pronouns and demonstratives, though different from definites, share with definites an essential property: namely, dealing in particular individuals.¹⁸ (56b) and (56c), for instance, bring the agent of the relevant utterance into the picture as the index of *we*, even if the relevant DPs are to be kind-denoting. The BP in (56a), however, abstracts away from object-level individuals altogether.

Pronouns and demonstratives are generally far more likely to show up where we might otherwise find a *the*-DP. Consider the following.

- (58) [A group of people are standing around after a long meeting. Three of them, Eric, Kevin, and Carl, all of the Acton family, decide to head to lunch. Eric announces:]
- a. The Actons are headed to lunch.
 - b. We are headed to lunch.
 - c. We Actons are headed to lunch.
 - d. Kevin, Carl, and I are headed to lunch.

In this scenario, the speaker intends to notify others of the departure of Kevin, Carl, and himself. (58a), analogous to (56a) does so in a straightforward manner, assuming everyone

¹⁸Such is the case at least for demonstrative and first- and second-person pronouns. Whether third-person pronouns are indexical in the same way or to the same extent is a matter of debate. See Elbourne (2013).

from the meeting knows which individuals are Actons. What about (58b)? Here, in contrast to (56b), the speaker has an excellent chance of getting his point across, if he merely supplements the word *we* with a gesture indicating Kevin and Carl. (58c) works as well, but would likely be marked for reasons similar to those given for the markedness of (56c). Finally, (58d) presents a handy option, being very clear about who exactly is departing. This stands in stark contrast to its analog (57), which is unlikely to lead to its intended interpretation and therefore unlikely to be said at all. Thus, overall, we see a much closer competition between the *the*-DP and its first-person counterparts than between the BP and its first-person counterparts.

Anaphoric uses

Now for anaphoric uses, the picture is different. On such uses, a pronoun or demonstrative may reasonably be expected. The reason is that it is far easier to resolve the interpretation of a sister-less pronoun or demonstrative on such uses. To pick a less depressing example than (56), consider, (59):

(59) Americans are less likely than Canadians to play hockey. We are also less likely to have snow tires.

Here, context is sufficiently rich for an addressee to interpret *we* as intended, so the brief pronominal form is to be expected. But of course, such forms are just as much expected to serve as an anaphor to a definite:

(60) The Actons are headed to lunch. Feel free to join us.

Summary

In brief, plural demonstratives and pronouns on certain uses can receive BP-like interpretations. Such uses, however, are relatively rare. This is to be expected. BPs serve to pick out properties (usually intensional ones) and their corresponding kinds, rather than providing a means for picking out particular, object-level individuals. The interpretation of pronouns

(at least first- and second-person ones) and demonstratives, on the other hand, crucially depends on particulars, being a function of specific, contextually determined individuals. Their typical function, then, like that of *the*-DPs, is in their familiar role of definitively picking out object-level individuals. The different relationships between *the*-DPs and pronouns on one hand and BPs and pronouns on the other, together with differences in the principal functions of *the*-DPs and BPs, play a crucial role in the explanation of the social effect of interest in this chapter, to which I now turn.

2.3 The pragmatics of speaker nonmembership

In this section I will explain why, in talking about all or typical instantiations of a particular type of individual, the use of a *the*-DP tends to depict the relevant individuals as a bloc of which the speaker is not a part, to an extent that the use of a BP does not. The short version of the analysis is this: BPs, which deal in properties and kinds, are the unmarked way of making such statements, and they neither pick out particular, object-level individuals, nor do they stand in particularly close competition with first-person forms. *The*-DPs, on the other hand, which deal in particular, object-level individuals, are somewhat marked in this function and stand in closer competition with first-person forms. Given their function of definitively picking out individuals, they make the dividing lines in the domain of discourse more salient, foregrounding questions of speaker membership, and, given their close competition with first-person forms, which have the speaker (more precisely, speech act agent) built into their denotation, they tend to invite an inference of speaker nonmembership in the relevant group.

It is worth emphasizing at the outset that while I will focus largely on tracing the speaker-nonmembership effect to differences in the entailed content of the relevant expressions, I hold that associative content plays an essential role in how these expressions are interpreted and used. On encountering a *the*-DP in the relevant kind of environment,

an addressee may reason about the expression not only according to the entailed content of the DP and related expressions, but also according to their associations—in this case a stronger association of speaker nonmembership with *the*-DPs than with other expressions. The importance of associations is especially clear where the relevant social meaning goes beyond what could be expected from reasoning over entailed content alone. To borrow an example from Chapter 1, consider the expression *the gays*. This term not only tends to signal speaker nonmembership (except where used ironically), it also has a distinctly derogatory tone. This extra meaning cannot come from entailed content alone. If it did, we would expect any such phrase to have an equally pejorative flavor, but this is not the case—consider *the Californians* or *the Italians*. As stated in Chapter 1 the full social meaning of *the gays* depends importantly on the accumulation of derogatory indexical freight over repeated uses in statements of othering and marginalization, similar to the indexical dynamics underlying the pejoration of terms like *boor* (‘farmer’ > ‘crude person’; Traugott 1988) or *hussy* (‘housewife’ > ‘impudent, immoral woman’; McConnell-Ginet 1989).

Putting things another way, what follows is not a processing nor even a comprehensive synchronic account of the meaning of interest. Rather, the work of this section is to provide an explanation based in the framework developed in Chapter 1 of why this particular meaning is expected to arise, having its roots in important differences in the entailed content and distribution of a range of related expressions.

Our operating minimal pair will be the same one we began this chapter with, namely:

- (61) a. Americans do love cars!
 b. The Americans do love cars!

My approach will be as follows. First, I will demonstrate that *the*-DPs, in contrast to BPs, are a marked way of talking about about all or typical instantiations of a particular type of individual. We will then examine the two variants in (61) in turn, subjecting each to the same kind of analysis applied to the example of McCain’s *that one* in Chapter 1. To close this chapter, I will talk about the relationship between speaker nonmembership and

distance and derogation.

2.3.1 *The-DPs in all-or-typical statements*

At the beginning of Section 2.2.9, I presented three basic types of BP use: (i) kind-level uses; (ii) characterizing uses; and (iii) episodic uses. Episodic uses were further divided into two types: those for which the BP has an indefinite feel, as in (62a), and those for which the BP has a more exhaustive feel, as in (63a). It seems clear enough that among indefinite-like episodic uses, the BP cannot be replaced with a *the*-DP without significant change in asserted content. For instance, (62a) unlike (62b) may be roughly paraphrased as, ‘Some dogs are barking.’

- (62) a. Dogs are barking.
 b. The dogs are barking.
- (63) a. Californians voted 3-to-1 in favor of the measure.
 b. The Californians voted 3-to-1 in favor of the measure.

The places where BPs and *the*-DPs are roughly interchangeable as far as entailed content is concerned are those instances in which the BP is used to say something about a kind, or all or typical instantiations of that kind—i.e., in uses of type (i) and (ii), and uses of type (iii) for which the BP has a more exhaustive feel, as in (63a). These uses, if interpreted as intended, end up effectively saying something about all or nearly all Xs, or typical Xs, or Xs as a kind—whether the relevant DP is of the form *Xs* or *the Xs*.

However, relative to BPs, *the*-DPs have a major disadvantage as tools for such purposes. In particular, *the*-DPs, which denote functions from situations to individuals, always run the risk of being evaluated relative to too small a situation on such uses. Consider the following minimal pairs:

- (64) a. Cats love tuna fish.
 b. The cats love tuna fish.

- (65) a. I love cats!
 b. I love the cats!

In both pairs, the (a) sentences lend themselves to an all-or-typical interpretation, such that the speaker is saying something about cats in general.¹⁹ In contrast, the (b) sentences most naturally lend themselves to interpretations whereby the speaker is saying something about a particular collection of cats—e.g., the cats she owns, the cats she’s pet-sitting, etc. On such interpretations, the situation relative to which the *the*-DP is evaluated is far smaller than one that would encapsulate all or typical cats.²⁰ And this is the case for a wide range of *the*-DPs—they tend to be evaluated relative to situations smaller than entire worlds or other macro-situations, in part because of the availability of all-or-typical-oriented expressions like BPs. Consider: *the dogs v. dogs, the books v. books, the windows v. windows, the feet v. feet, the concepts v. concepts, the bacteria v. bacteria*, etc. Moreover, as far as considerations of brevity or simplicity are concerned (Grice’s maxim of Manner; also Horn 1984, Keller 1994), a BP will outshine its *the*-DP counterpart every time, which could add to the markedness of *the*-DPs in the contexts of interest.

Of course, this is not to say that *the*-DPs cannot be used for all-or-typical statements. If that were the case, we would have little here to discuss. Indeed, there are *the*-DPs that are relatively amenable to all-or-typical interpretations. These are *the*-DPs whose constituent NPs correspond to groups whose members we frequently talk about in broad, collective terms, such as nations (*the Italians*), sports teams (*the Denver Broncos*), or political parties (*the Tories*). Nonetheless, the point remains that, generally speaking, *the*-DPs are a marked choice relative to BPs for making all-or-typical statements. Unlike BPs, only a small share of their uses are for all-or-typical statements—most of the time, they are used to pick out one instantiation or a select subset of instantiations of a kind/property.

¹⁹There may be indefinite-like readings available with these sentences, too, but they seem far less likely, especially given the availability of expressions like *some cats*.

²⁰Indeed, of the first fifty tokens of *the cats* in COCA (Davies 2008-), only one merits an all-or-typical interpretation.

With this in mind, let's now return to the scenario from the beginning of the chapter: a group of conference attendees are talking at a restaurant in Paris, and Bauer, a German, remarks on the number of U.S. citizens who own multiple automobiles. Jones, whose nationality is unknown (his fellow diners presume he is either from Canada or the U.S.) replies to Bauer's remark with either (66a) or (66b):

- (66) a. Americans do love cars!
b. The Americans do love cars!

2.3.2 Variant 1: Using a bare plural

Americans as unmarked

As established in the previous section, using a BP is generally an unmarked way of making a statement about all or typical individuals instantiating a particular kind—in this case Americans—and there is nothing about the present context to suggest that it would present an exception. Recall that under the VE Principle, an utterance lining up with conversational expectations is relatively unlikely to be interpreted as having special significance. Jones has used an unmarked form, so by the VE principle, it is unlikely that his choice of DP would raise questions or send any particular message beyond the contributions of its entailed content.

Alternatives

Nonetheless, there are alternative ways that Jones could get across the claim that Americans love cars. In the spirit of the FS principle—which, in part, states that the full significance of a particular form on a particular use depends on the relation in which it stands with other, functionally related forms—let's consider what other options Jones might have exercised, focusing on the subject DP.

One alternative Jones might have used is *the Americans*. This DP has a fair bit in

common with *Americans*—formally, it differs only in the presence or absence of *the*, and both options would have led to a similar claim about Americans and their relation to cars. Of course, as discussed at length earlier in this chapter, their entailed content is also different in important ways, the former focusing on particular, object-level individuals, and the latter on properties and kinds. So they are far from being perfect substitutes, even in terms of entailed content. Moreover, as discussed in Section 2.3.1, *the*-DPs, relative to BPs, are generally marked—i.e., unexpected—in such contexts; for one thing, they contain additional phono-syntactic material. For the simple purpose of saying something about Americans in general, the less complex BP suffices.

The picture is similar for first-person forms. In using a BP form, Jones has opted to deal in properties and kinds, rather than in definitive (object-level) individuals. As discussed in Section 2.2.10, plural first-person forms are sometimes put to this use, but relatively rarely so; since their interpretations are crucially linked to specific, contextually determined individuals, they typically behave like definites rather than BPs, so they have relatively little overlap with the latter.

Thus, while *the*-DPs and first-person forms are possible alternatives to the BP in the context of interest, they fare only so well in terms of conversational expectations and relatedness to the BP. By the DI Principle, then, which states that the importance of a given alternative in determining the full significance of an utterance depends on how it scores on these two measures, these alternatives are relatively unlikely to play a major role in the interpretation of the actual utterance in the present context.

Summary

So, overall, the picture is this: BPs, being relatively unmarked in such contexts, don't signal special significance, in accordance with the VE Principle. Moreover, because *the*-DPs and first-person forms aren't especially expected nor especially closely related to BPs in such contexts, these alternatives are relatively unlikely to play an especially important role in

understanding the full significance of Jones's utterance, in keeping with the DI Principle. Taking this together, Jones's use of a BP form is itself relatively unlikely to invite any inferences concerning the speaker's status as an American or non-American. Let's now turn to the case in which Jones instead uses a *the*-DP.

2.3.3 Variant 2: Using a *the*-DP

Here we assume an identical scenario, except that instead of saying (66a), Jones instead says (66b).

Inviting an inference

As I claimed at the outset of this chapter, the variant in (66b) is more likely to invite an inference of speaker nonmembership than the BP variant. The key differences between the two are that with a *the*-DP: (i) the variant actually used is more likely to be ascribed special significance, in virtue of being more marked; and (ii) the relevant alternatives are likely of greater weight in interpreting the actual utterance.

As discussed above, use of a *the*-DP to talk about all-or-typical members of a group is, relative to use of a BP, generally a marked choice—*the*-DPs being longer and running the risk of being evaluated relative to too small a situation. Already, then, this scenario looks different from the previous one in terms of the principles of interpretation and use from Chapter 1. First, according to the VE Principle, the present variant, being less expected, is more likely than the previous variant to be interpreted as bearing special significance. Second, recall that in the previous case the *the*-DP alternative to the DP actually used was not especially likely to play a major role in the interpretation of the DP actually used, because the *the*-DP would not score especially high in terms of conversational expectations (the DI Principle). Here, the situation is flipped: in this case, it is the BP that is the alternative variant, and being a relatively unmarked form in this context, it is more likely to

figure importantly into the interpretation of the variant actually used. That is, considering just *Americans* and *the Americans*, in the previous scenario the alternative variant (a *the*-DP), being somewhat marked, is less likely to be taken into account in the interpretation of the actual variant than the alternative in the present case (a BP) would be, being relatively unmarked.

First-person forms are also more likely to play an important role in the interpretation of the actual variant in this case. As discussed in Section 2.2.10, first-person forms are more closely related to *the*-DPs than to BPs in terms of content and distribution. Thus, in keeping with the DI Principle, they are likely to be of greater importance as alternatives here than in the previous scenario.

Together, these considerations point to *the*-DPs like the subject of the present scenario being ascribed special significance in such contexts, and to the BP and first-person alternatives having a crucial part to play in the interpretation of the utterance. What sets the previous scenario apart from the present one is that in the case of the former, the actual variant was relatively unmarked with respect to the alternatives of interest, and was also less closely related to the first-person alternatives in particular. Thus, by the VE and DI Principles, in the present case the utterance is more likely to invite an inference, and one that takes first-person forms into account.

The difference between the two scenarios is represented diagrammatically in Figure 2.1. The two subfigures are meant only to be illustrative: I don't mean to be making a precise claim about how close the variant actually used in each case is to its alternatives in terms of importance to the ultimate interpretation of the DP—as discussed in Chapter 1, such factors will vary across individuals and situations. The key point is that where the BP is the actual variant, the relevant alternatives are less likely to figure into the ultimate interpretation than where the *the*-DP is the actual variant.

So we know why the *the*-DP in such circumstances is generally more likely to invite some inference. The remaining question is why speaker nonmembership in particular is a

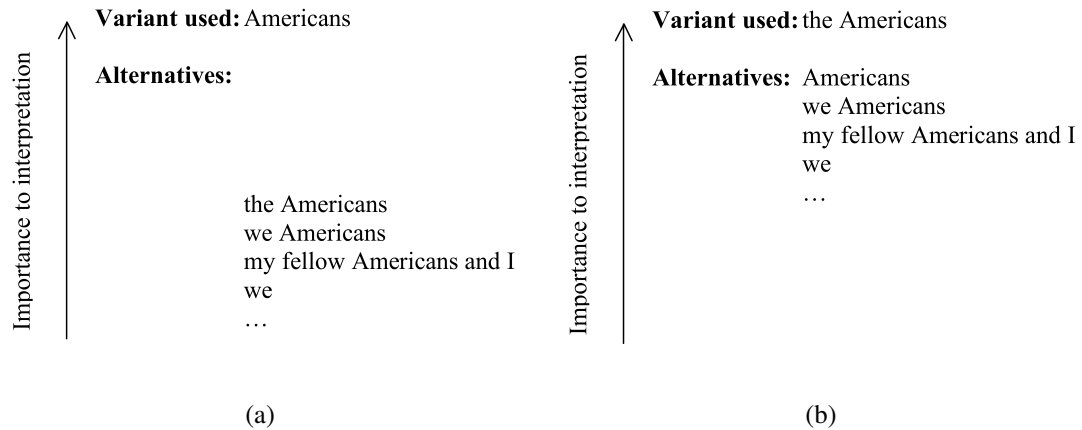


Figure 2.1: Differences in alternatives' weight based on variant actually used.

likely inference. For that, we turn to the FS Principle.

Why speaker nonmembership in particular?

Recall that the FS Principle states that the full significance of an utterance depends importantly on what distinguishes it from functionally related alternatives. Here the alternatives of interest are BPs and first-person forms. What separates *the*-DPs from these alternatives?

Taking BPs first, as emphasized throughout this chapter, *the*-DPs, unlike BPs, definitively pick out particular, object-level individuals. As a corollary, *the*-DPs carve up the domain of discourse, delineating and setting apart one group of individuals from the rest, in a way that BPs do not. Thus, use of a *the*-DP where a BP might otherwise be expected suggests that particulars and divisions in the domain of discourse—who's in and who's out—matter.

What about the role of first-person forms? As I showed in Section 2.2, *the*-DPs, unlike first-person forms, do not have a presupposition of speaker instantiation; in terms of entailed content, they are totally silent on the matter of whether or not the speaker is part of the group of individuals being talked about (see Table 2.1). Now, as just discussed,

the use of the *the*-DP, in light of the availability of the BP form *Americans*, suggests that details about which particular individuals are being talked about matter. Let's see how *the*-DPs and first-person forms stack up in terms of conversational expectations in such a context, using Grice's maxims as a guide. Given the speaker's emphasis on particular individuals and carving up the domain of discourse, a first-person form that still manages to pick out all-or-typical Americans is preferable to a *the*-DP that does not bear entailments concerning speaker membership—the former would convey additional, apparently relevant information (indicating that the speaker is a member of the relevant group), thereby faring better vis-à-vis Grice's maxims of Quantity and Relation. Furthermore, a first-person form like *we Americans* in the present context is not particularly complex or ambiguous relative to *the Americans*, so the two alternatives would likely fare similarly well vis-à-vis Grice's maxim of Manner. Even the favorably concise *we* could be clear enough in this case, given the discourse prior to Jones's utterance. From this perspective then, taking stock of the usual Gricean considerations regarding conversational expectations, it seems the only clear way for the use of a basic, first-person form to violate conversational expectations would be if its use would mean conveying false information—i.e., if the speaker is not an American. Indeed, more generally, when people pick out particular individuals we often expect them to use first-person forms if they are identical to or part of the group being talked about. Consider, for instance, the strangeness of referring to oneself via one's name.

So, with the FS principle in mind, the derivation is as follows. Given that, in not using a BP, the speaker has foregrounded particulars and divisions in the domain of discourse—setting apart a specific collective of individuals—and at the same time has not used a first-person form, a hearer may well infer that the speaker is not a member of the relevant group (in this case, is not an American). These are the basic dynamics underlying the inference of speaker nonmembership.

2.3.4 Pressures against using *the*-DPs: An absolute restriction?

Given the preceding discussion, one might expect that a speaker would never use a *the*-DP to talk about a group of which she is part. But, of course, this is not the case. For there are other communicative goals, conversational expectations, and related contextual considerations that, where present, disfavor a first-person form or favor a *the*-DP. For example, imagine that A, a high school student, is giving B, a student new to A's school, a tour of the school:

(67) [A is giving B a tour of A's high school.]

A: And the athletics here are great, too.

B: That's cool. So, does the school have a cross-country program?

A: Yep, and they/the team won the state championship this year!

B, on the basis of the exchange in (67) may well reason that A is not a member of the school's cross-country team, given the relationship between *the*-DPs and first-person forms and the dynamics discussed above. At the same time, however, this inference would not arise in every such scenario. Cultural expectations of humility, for instance, could play a role. Suppose that A's second utterance (67) were said less enthusiastically and with a tone of vague indirection, as when people offer somewhat uninformative answers to questions like, "Where did you go to college?" (E.g., "Oh, I went to school in New Haven [Yale].") Under such circumstances, B might infer on the basis of (67) that A is a member of the cross-country team and is merely being modest.

Along the same lines, there are certainly cases in which it is considered rude to talk explicitly about oneself unless asked, in which case inferences of speaker nonmembership are less likely. There are also often pressures to take oneself "out of the picture," so to speak, in order to maintain an air of objectivity—the kind often preferred for formal writing and reporting. In this connection, the joint authors of a journal publication may refer to themselves in the publication as "the authors."

Yet another pair of considerations that favor the use of *the*-DPs, especially where there

is pressure not to use first-person forms, is the desire to present the group of interest as a collective or bloc, and the desire to ensure an exhaustive interpretation. As for the bloc-effect, plural *the*-DPs are generally preferable to BPs in this regard because only the former delivers all of the individuals of interest together as a single plural entity. Compare:

- (68) a. The Americans need to pay off their debts.
 b. Americans need to pay off their debts.

Both sentences are consistent with a reading under which individual Americans have debts that they need to pay off (say, personal credit card debts), and both are consistent with a reading under which Americans as a collective have debts they need to pay off (say, debts to foreign governments). However, (68a) is more likely than (68b) to have the latter, collective reading, because the phrase *the Americans*, unlike *Americans*, necessarily picks out the collection of Americans as a single entity.

As for exhaustivity, plural *the*-DPs (where their content is defined) always pick out the maximum plural individual having the relevant property, whereas BPs more readily permit exceptions. Compare (69a) and (69b), the former of which has a more exhaustive feel:

- (69) a. The Americans drink fluoridated water.
 b. Americans drink fluoridated water.

So there are reasons why a speaker may opt for a *the*-DP even in talking about a group of which she is a part, particularly where there are pressures against using a first-person form, such as the desire or expectation that the speaker will project objectivity. Relative to a BP, *the*-DPs are more likely to present the group in question as solid collective and to yield an exhaustive interpretation, and there may be other such motivations as well (to say nothing of situations in which a speaker may deliberately try to hide her membership). Thus, we should expect to find cases in which speakers use *the*-DPs to talk about their own groups. At the same time, however, under what for many English speakers are unexceptional (though certainly not exceptionless) circumstances, using a *the*-DP runs the risk of communicating speaker nonmembership in the relevant group, given the dynamics

discussed at length above.

2.3.5 Section summary

To review, in this section I provided an account of the speaker-nonmembership effect of interest, based on the socio-pragmatic framework developed in Chapter 1. The account, in brief, is as follows. On one hand, BPs are relatively unmarked in statements concerning all or typical individuals of a particular group/kind, so they are relatively unlikely to be ascribed special significance in such contexts (VE Principle). Relatedly, the relevant alternatives, *the*-DPs and first-person forms, are not especially likely to play a major role in the interpretation of the actual utterance (DI Principle)—BPs and first-person forms are not very closely related, and, generally speaking, neither first-person forms nor *the*-DPs score especially well in terms of conversational expectations relative to BPs in such contexts. In contrast, *the*-DPs, being rarer in such contexts, are more likely to be ascribed special significance, and the relevant alternatives are more likely to play an important role—first-person forms are more closely related to *the*-DPs than to BPs, and BPs, scoring well in terms of both relatedness and conversational expectations, are also likely to figure importantly into the interpretation. From there, the relevant inference arises due to what makes *the*-DPs distinctive relative to BPs and first-person forms, in keeping with the FS Principle. Unlike BPs, *the*-DPs deal in and set apart particular, object-level individuals, suggesting that information concerning exactly who is being talked about is important; and unlike first-person forms, *the*-DPs do not encode speaker-instantiation, suggesting that first-person forms, which are informative as regards particular individuals, are not applicable.

This account predicts that other third-person expressions with definite uses would also tend to invite an inference of speaker nonmembership. Returning to the case of Jones, suppose his utterance were one of the following:

- (70) a. They do love cars!
 b. Those Americans do love cars!

Both alternatives would strongly suggest that Jones is not an American. And this is to be expected. (*These Americans* generally licenses the same inference—consider a speaker beginning an utterance, “These Americans . . .,” intending an all-or-typical interpretation. This DP would be a strange choice in the present context, however, because of discourse considerations concerning the use of *these* rather than *those*. See Chapter 4). Consider again Table 2.1. There we see that, like *the*-DPs, third-person forms like *they* and *these/those Xs* deal in particular, object-individuals but lack a presupposition of speaker-instantiation. Of course, the nonmembership effect of (70b) may well be helped along by the fact that *those* is typically associated with distance from the speaker. Either way, it is clear that the effect applies to third-person definites more generally.²¹

In a moment, I will turn to two variationist studies of the use of *the*-DPs. But first, let’s discuss the relationship between the speaker-nonmembership effect and the use of *the*-DPs for distancing or derogation.

2.4 Nonmembership, distancing, and derogation

Up to this point, I have provided a socio-pragmatic account of why the use of a *the*-DP where a BP might otherwise be expected can lead to an inference that the speaker is not a member of the relevant group. But such uses often signal related social meanings that go beyond speaker nonmembership *per se*. For instance, often when I ask fellow native English speakers of the U.S. what they think of the phrase *the Americans*, they often tell me it “sounds negative.” In this brief section, I will remark on how the speaker-nonmembership

²¹The present theory also predicts that, given the availability of second-person forms like *you (Xs)*, use of a *the*-DP or other third-person definite may also invite inferences concerning the speaker’s belief or attitude toward the addressee(s) membership or nonmembership in the relevant group. I must leave this matter for future work.

meaning is related to indicating or reinforcing distance between oneself and a particular group and to signaling a derogatory stance toward that group. As part of the discussion, I will say a few words about the place of associative content in the relevant social meanings more explicitly.

2.4.1 From nonmembership to distance

Given the speaker-nonmembership effect of *the*-DPs, we can quite naturally predict that they may be used as tools to mark distance between oneself and the relevant group. For one, inviting an inference of speaker nonmembership is a way of putting distance between oneself and the group of interest—nonmembership is distance in and of itself. But there is also another dynamic by which the use of a *the*-DP can distance the speaker from the relevant group, related to the first. In particular, by using a form that implicates speaker nonmembership in a way that a BP does not, a speaker may signal distance from the group regardless of her actual membership status. The logic underlying the effect is most clear where the speaker is mutually known not to be a member of the relevant group. Consider the following:

(71) [Canadian mother to Canadian daughter, concerning her daughter's husband—a U.S. citizen who is eating a Big Mac at 9am]

Mother: He's eating a Big Mac for breakfast?

Daughter: What can I say? (The) Americans love fast food!

In this example, with either the *the*-DP or the BP, the daughter will end up communicating a very similar proposition, and because it is mutually known to speaker and addressee that she is a Canadian, opting for the *the*-DP will not contribute any new information as regards her citizenship. Nevertheless, opting for the *the*-DP can still do social work for her. The reasoning goes like this. Use of a *the*-DP stands out relative to use of a BP, so we generally expect there to be special significance to doing so (VE Principle)—that is, we expect an invited inference. One such invited inference is that the speaker is a nonmember of

the relevant group. In this case, though, that is already part of the speaker and addressee's common ground, so the use of the marked form is unlikely to be motivated simply by the speaker's desire to inform the addressee of her nonmembership. But by employing the form that is associated with speaker nonmembership rather than the more neutral BP, she can in a sense emphasize her nonmembership. And emphasizing one's nonmembership in a group is a move that suggests a desire to construct or reinforce social or attitudinal distance between oneself and that group. In this way, use of a *the*-DP rather than a BP can signal not only speaker nonmembership in the relevant group, but also distance between the speaker and the group more generally.

2.4.2 From nonmembership and distance to derogation, and the role of associative content

It is tempting to assume that marking distance in turn entails derogation. In general, it seems, we tend to mark distance between ourselves and things that we do not wish to be associated with. Importantly, however, the one does not simply follow from the other.

Indeed, marking distance can be a way of showing respect or deference. Silverstein's (2003) treatment of *tu-vous* distinctions, for instance, centers around the notion of distance, as do many other accounts of (in)formality in language. A particularly instructive case concerning the link between distance and derogation comes from the expression *the wife*, used to refer to one's own wife (or the wife of an addressee). In my experience, this phrase—which clearly marks distance between the speaker and the woman of interest (being in competition with more expected forms like *my wife* that involve first-person possession)—has a distinctly derogatory tone. In contrast, however, Ewart Thomas (p.c.) informs me that in his hometown in Guyana, use of this phrase in fact tends to express that one's spouse occupies a place of high domestic status, and communicates more an air of respect or deference than of pejoration.

It is clear, then, that derogation and othering, though related to distance, do not simply follow from it. If, for instance, the social meaning of *the wife* were based strictly on reasoning over its entailed content and the entailed content of related expressions, then we would expect the social meaning to be roughly the same regardless of the speech community in which it was being used (assuming fixed entailed content across communities). But this is not the case. It must be, then, that the inter-community difference in interpretation has some other source. This difference is likely due to corresponding differences in the associative content of the phrase from one community to the next, such that *the wife* has a richer history of being involved in statements signaling respect and deference in one community than in the other. The difference in associative content may itself have multiple sources, rooted perhaps in inter-community differences in social structures and ideologies.

In any case, the important point is that the social meanings of *the wife* cannot simply be a function of reasoning over entailed content. The same, then, goes for the negativity associated with the use of certain plural *the*-DPs in talking about certain groups of individuals. It's hard to see how one could judge a decontextualized token of *the Americans* as sounding negative if associative content were not at work. Even if we could get as far as an implication of social distance based on reasoning over entailed content alone, marking social distance certainly does not entail a negative stance. Instead, it seems that signaling a negative stance, though certainly related to distancing, comes in part from associations with prior uses. Indeed, even an inference of speaker nonmembership could in principle arise in many cases simply because, relative to other members of its comparison class, *the*-DPs are the DP's most closely associated with speaker nonmembership.

At the same time, however, entailed content clearly also plays an important role in understanding the social meanings of interest. Regardless of how much speakers and addressees actually attend to such content in inviting and making such inferences in practice, examining the entailed content of the relevant expressions helps explain why the inferences are what they are, and why the expressions' associative content is what it is.

2.4.3 Section Summary

To summarize this section, inferences of speaker nonmembership are clearly related to inferences of social distance and derogation. The derogation effect especially foregrounds the importance of associative content and ideology, given that marking social distance does not entail expressing a negative attitude toward the relevant group. A comprehensive understanding of the range of social meanings associated with the use of plural *the*-DPs requires consideration of both entailed and associative content alike.

2.5 Chapter summary

In this chapter, using the framework developed in Chapter 1, I have provided a socio-pragmatic account of the tendency whereby using a *the*-DP to talk about a group of individuals tends to depict that group as a bloc of which the speaker is not a part, to an extent that use of a bare plural (BP) does not. The account drew on the relative markedness of such uses (VE and FS Principles) and important differences in the content and relatedness of *the*-DPs, BPs, and first-person forms (FS and DI Principles). Specifically, (i) while BPs typically abstract away from particulars, *the*-DPs are concerned with picking out well-defined groups of individuals, in turn drawing lines in the domain of discourse and foregrounding questions concerning who is and is not a member of the relevant group; and (ii) *the*-DPs stand in closer competition with first-person forms than do BPs. I then explained how use of *the*-DPs to express distance from or derogation of a group is related to the speaker-nonmembership meaning, and underscored the importance of associative content in understanding the meanings of interest (AE Principle). In addition, I set the stage for future research on the social meanings of definites and kind-referring terms by highlighting the crucial features that distinguish the different expressions from each other.

In keeping with the view of variation espoused in Chapter 1, given the differences in the social meanings of *the*-DPs and BPs discussed in the present chapter, we should expect to

find corresponding variation in their distribution. In Chapter 3, to which I now turn, I will confirm this prediction.

Chapter 3

The and nonmembership: Two variationist studies

3.1 The basis of this chapter

In Chapter 1, I outlined a perspective on language interpretation and use based in part on the view that people speak in service of their goals (interactional, descriptive, or otherwise) and that different expressions and forms, having different meanings, have different utility for attaining a given goal. Insofar as we expect any two people to have the same goal, and insofar as they have shared access to a particular expression or form for attaining that goal, we may in turn expect, *ceteris paribus*, that they will exhibit similar usage patterns relative to that expression or form. This chapter provides an illustration of these dynamics, via two case studies of variation in the use of *the*-DPs and bare plurals (BPs).

In Chapter 2, I argued at length that the use of a *the*-DP where a bare plural might have been used instead can engender an inference of speaker nonmembership in the group being talked about, and I provided a socio-pragmatic account of why this is the case. I furthermore explained how this effect relates to the use of *the*-DPs as a way of marking or emphasizing distance between the speaker and the group being talked about, and, in some

cases, as a means of derogation.

Now, as discussed in Section 2.3.4, there are indeed some other reasons why an individual might use a *the*-DP where a BP might otherwise have been used, including a wish to depict the relevant individuals as a collective, or to suggest that the relevant predicate is intended to apply exhaustively to the relevant individuals. (It is quite possible that there are other, related effects as well.) The examples in (1) and (2) (repeated from Section 2.3.4) illustrate. The (a) sentence in (1), for instance, with a *the*-DP as its subject, seems more likely than the (b) sentence to be interpreted as saying something about the joint debt of U.S. citizens as a nation, rather than the debts of private individuals. As for (2), it seems that the (a) sentence is more likely than its counterpart to suggest that all or nearly all U.S. citizens drink fluoridated water.

- (1) a. The Americans need to pay off their debts.
- b. Americans need to pay off their debts.
- (2) a. The Americans drink fluoridated water.
- b. Americans drink fluoridated water.

Taking stock of all of these potential effects we have: (i) that of communicating non-membership, distance, or even derogation relative to the group of interest; (ii) that of depicting the relevant group as a bloc; and (iii) that of favoring an exhaustive interpretation. Now if one wishes to establish oneself as a member of a group or express loyalty to or affiliation with that group, consideration (i) very clearly disfavors the use of a *the*-DP to talk about the relevant group. Conversely, it very clearly favors the use of a *the*-DP to talk about a group one wishes to express distance from. With considerations (ii) and (iii), however, the picture is rather unclear. That is, it's hard to see why a person wishing to express (dis)alignment with or (non)membership in a relevant group would favor or disfavor the use of a *the*-DP on the basis of these latter two considerations. One can certainly imagine how a person might leverage the collectivity or exhaustivity of *the*-DPs in talking favorably or unfavorably about a particular group.

Taking all of these considerations together, we ought to predict that, on average, speakers will use *the*-DPs rather than BPs more in talking about groups of which they are not a part or wish to express distance from than in talking about groups they belong to or wish to express alignment with. In this chapter, I will present two corpus-based analyses that show that this is indeed the case. I will begin with a study of the use of *the*-DPs and BPs by members of the U.S. House of Representatives to refer to Democrats and Republicans, using Djalali's (2013) House Proceedings Corpus. As predicted, Democratic speakers in the corpus have a much higher *the*-DP-to-BP ratio in talking about Republicans than in talking about their own party, and vice versa. I then turn to an analysis of terms used to talk about Democrats and Republicans on the political television talk show *The McLaughlin Group*. Again we see a pattern whereby political pundits' party affiliations generally correspond as expected with their speech. In this latter study, however, the differences are subtler, owing both to complex relationships between certain speakers and their nominal political affiliations, and to pressures for the speakers to exhibit objectivity. In this way, the results of these studies not only confirm predictions tied to socio-pragmatic differences between BPs and *the*-DPs, they also underscore the importance of ideology, expectations, and other contextual considerations in language interpretation and use, in accordance with the FS Principle of Chapter 1.

3.2 Study 1: *The use in the U.S. House of Representatives*

Based on the social meaning discussed in Chapter 2, it stands to reason that we should generally expect speakers to opt for *the* *Xs* over *Xs* at a higher rate if the speaker is not an *X* or wishes to distance herself from *Xs* than if she is an *X* or wishes to affiliate with them. In order to test this claim, I turn to Djalali's (2013) House Proceedings Corpus (HPC), a complete set of transcripts of the proceedings of the U.S. House of Representatives from February 1993 through December 2012. The corpus, comprised of speeches by members

of the House over this time period, contains tens of millions of words spoken by over 800 different speakers. The HPC provides an ideal testing ground for this hypothesis, given its size and its diversity of speakers and the partisan nature of the discourse.

The principle measure of interest is the following, henceforth the *the-percentage* or *the-%*:

- (3) For any plural count noun Xs and set of speakers S , the *the-percentage* of Xs for S is defined as:

$$\sum_{s \in S} (\# \text{ tokens of } the \ Xs) / \sum_{s \in S} (\# \text{ tokens of } the \ Xs + \# \text{ tokens of BP } Xs)$$

Stated in terms of this measure, then, the hypothesis for this section is as follows:

Hypothesis: On average, a given representative will have a higher *the-%* when talking about the opposing party than when talking about her own party.

3.2.1 Extracting the tokens of interest

There are more than 70,000 tokens of *Democrats* and *Republicans* in the HPC, so analyzing each token by hand is time-prohibitive. As an alternative I followed the following methodology.

First, I collected every sentence in the corpus containing either a token of *Democrats* or of *Republicans* or both, keeping track of the speaker of the sentence and the date on which it was spoken. The corpus contains a handful of duplicate transcripts; any sentences that were duplicative in terms of the sentence itself, the speaker name, and the date of utterance were removed, taking the total number of sentences down from 84,863 to 71,199. Among the 71,199 non-duplicative sentences there are 73,242 tokens of *Democrats* and *Republicans*. In order to simplify the analysis slightly, only the first token of *Democrats* in sentences containing *Democrats* and the first token of *Republicans* in sentences containing *Republicans* was analyzed, so that 97.2% of the bona fide tokens of *Democrats* and *Republicans* in the corpus were included in the analysis.

The next step in the analysis was to identify the determiner for each of the 71,199 tokens. Tokens of *Democrats* or *Republicans* for which the noun was pre- or post-nominally modified (e.g., *Senate Democrats*, *Republicans in the House*) were excluded for two reasons. First, restricting the analysis to unmodified tokens helps ensure that the tokens are indeed comparable—there is no doubt a major difference between, say, *(the) blue-collar Democrats* and *(the) Democrats*. Second, admitting modified tokens allows for cases in which the speaker is not a member of the subgroup being talked about, but is a member of the larger group associated with the head noun—complicating the picture significantly. Consider, for example, a phrase like *the senior Republicans*. The use of *the* in that phrase should not have the same bearing as the use of *the* in *the Republicans* on whether we take the speaker of the phrase to be an Republicans. Accordingly, such tokens are excluded from the analysis. This meant that in identifying the determiner for each token, in most cases only the immediately preceding word was relevant, since tokens with intervening modifiers were to be excluded. The set of possible determiners searched for is enumerated in (4):

- (4) all Arabic numeral terms 2 through 999 (with or without *of the*); *zero*; all written numeral terms *two* through *twenty*; *any (of the)*; *all (of the)*; *enough (of the)*; *few (of the)*; *fewer (of the)*; *many (of the)*; *most (of the)*; *more (of the)*; *no*; *none of the*; *other (of the)*; *several (of the)*; *some (of the)*; *the*; *these*; *those*; *my*; *our*; *your*; *his*; *her*; *its*; *their*; *us*; *we*; *you*

Whether some of the items in (4) are better categorized as being of some other syntactic category than determiner is not relevant for our purposes, since ultimately we care only about unmodified *the*-DPs and truly bare plurals. Any token not preceded by one of the items in (4) was marked as having no determiner.

Of course, some such tokens did have a determiner with a modifier intervening between the determiner and the token. But, as stated above, modified tokens were to be excluded from the analysis. Accordingly, I attempted to mark all tokens with modified NPs for exclusion. Tokens preceded by the items in (5) were marked as such, as were tokens followed by the items in (6). Each item in the lists was included on the basis of an actual token of

Democrats or *Republicans* preceded/followed by that item.

- (5) *committee; subcommittee; House; Washington; senate; party; well-respected; Congressional; Texas; California; southern; regular; sensible; senior; junior; rank-and-file; moderate; conservative; liberal; centrist; right-wing; left-wing; radical; extremist; fat-cat; blue(-)collar; blue(-)dog; -and-spend; brave; new; judiciary; fellow; other(-)body; good; bad; teenage; Christian; thoughtful; mean-spirited; valiant; responsible; -life; -choice; key; Bush; Clinton; Reagan; Gingrich; majority; minority; ruling; ranking; white; black; middle class; poor; wealthy; leading; young; freshm(e/a)n; do-nothing; 30-something*
- (6) *who; on the; on this; on that; on these; on those; in the; in this; in that; in these; in those; in Congress; in Washington; that are; that were; that will; that said; that voted; that promised; up here*

Lastly, I excluded those tokens for which the relevant DP was the pivot of an existential *there* as in “there are Democrats on the panel,” because such tokens generally cannot be substituted with *the*-DPs, and where they can, a substantial change in meaning results. Excluding potentially modified tokens by the means described above and excluding existential uses brings the number of tokens in the analysis down from 71,199 to 59,635.

Of those 59,635, 31,120 (52.2%) are BPs, and 23,772 (39.9%) are *the*-DPs, for a total of 54,892 relevant tokens—with the remaining 4,743 (8.0%) being tokens headed by other determiners. As a final cut, I removed all tokens for which the speaker was unidentified (405 tokens) and for which the speaker was identified but was neither a Democrat nor a Republican (94 tokens).¹ The remaining 54,393 tokens served as the primary basis for the present analysis.

¹As it turns out, there is only one such relevant speaker in the corpus, Independent Bernard Sanders. According to Wikipedia, Sanders, now a U.S. Senator, “caucuses with the Democratic Party and is counted as a Democrat for the purposes of committee assignments” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernie_Sanders, last accessed 23 May 2014.) Sanders’ diction is in line with this characterization, as evidenced in the following excerpt from a November 6, 2003 speech:

- (i) I am very proud that a number of Republicans joined many of us Democrats, Independents, on the floor of this House to say that that is wrong and that in fact we were not going to cut back on the overtime pay that workers earn and deserve.

In keeping with the central hypothesis of this chapter, Sanders’ *the*-% is far higher for *Republicans* than for *Democrats* at 49.1% and 33.3%, respectively.

Checking for accuracy

To test the accuracy of this narrowing process, I checked by hand the validity of the categorizations for a random sample of 250 of the original 71,199 sentences. Overall, the procedure was highly accurate. In that sample, 213 of the 250 tokens were marked for inclusion via the automated procedure. 207 (97.2%) of those 213 tokens were correctly marked as such, and of those 207, 206 were assigned the correct determiner, so that 96.7% of the 213 marked for inclusion were both correctly marked as such and assigned the correct determiner. There were an additional three tokens that were marked for exclusion that ought to have been marked for inclusion, two of which were either BPs or *the*-DPs. Both of those two tokens were BP-tokens of *Democrats* spoken by Republicans.

Overall, the *the*-%s based on the automated labeling from the sample differed minimally from the *the*-%s calculated by hand. For Democrats, the *the*-% of *Democrats* from the automated labeling was 26.2%, compared with 25.6% based on labeling by hand. The *the*-% of *Republicans* for Democrats based on the automated labeling was 52.5%, compared with 53.4% based on labeling by hand. Thus, for Democrats' speech in the sample, analyzing the data by hand would have only served to provide stronger support for our hypothesis, yielding a lower *the*-DP for Democrats' talk about their own group and a higher *the*-DP for their talk about the opposing party. For Republicans, the *the*-% of *Republicans* was the same whether the data was automatically labeled or labeled by hand, at 23.3%. The only value that came out more favorably in terms of our hypothesis when calculated based on the automated labeling was the *the*-% of *Democrats* spoken by Republicans, at 47.2%, compared with 45.3% for the data labeled by hand. In this case, the value based on labeling by hand was 96.0% of the value from the automated labeling. As the results to come will show, this potential bias has no substantial bearing on our hypothesis.

In brief, the automated labeling was highly accurate, and where inaccurate, led to results that differed minimally from results obtained by hand. For each of the four combinations

of speaker party and party term, the *the*-% based on the automated labeling was within 5% of the *the*-% based on labeling by hand, and in only one of the four cases did labeling by hand lead to a result more favorable to our hypothesis.

3.2.2 Findings

On to the full data set. The basic prediction is that, on average, a given representative will have a higher *the*-% when talking about the opposing party than when talking about her own party. The data from the small sample just reviewed suggest that this is the case in the HPC, and indeed it is.

The overall picture

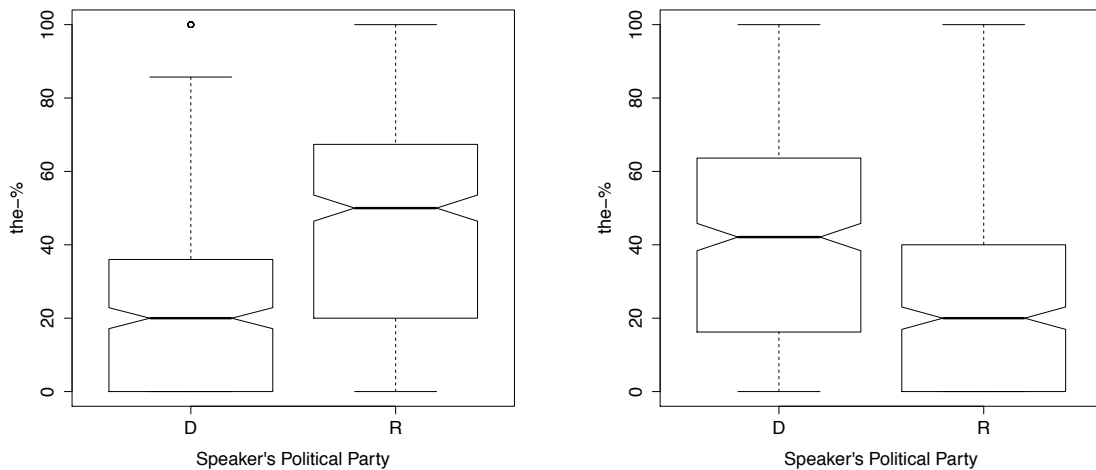
Speaking first in terms of overall numbers, the picture is very clear. Table 3.1 presents the *the*-%s for both parties for both of the party terms. The distributional patterns are nearly a mirror image of each other. Democrats' *the*-% for the term *Democrats* is 30.4% compared with 54.4% for the term *Republicans*. Conversely, Republicans' *the*-% for the term *Democrats* is 53.3%, compared with 26.1% for the term *Republicans*. In each case a given party's *the*-% for the opposing party term is over 1.75 times higher than the *the*-% for their own party-term. This holds even if we scale down the *the*-% of *Democrats* for *Republicans* by 4.0% to 51.2% to account for the potential bias introduced by the automated labeling. (See Section 3.2.1.)

Party	<i>Dem the</i> -%	<i>Rep the</i> -%	<i>Dem N</i>	<i>Rep N</i>
Democrats	30.4%	54.4%	11,352	18,992
Republicans	53.3%	26.1%	13,007	11,042

Table 3.1: *The*-%s for the members of the U.S. House of Representatives, aggregated by party.

Variation within parties

The aggregate difference in usage between members of the two parties is not merely driven by a few vocal individuals. Rather, the difference is robust across a wide range of speakers. Figure 3.1(a) presents two box plots of the *the*-% of the word *Democrats* for the individual speakers in the corpus—one plot for Democrats and one plot for Republicans. The median *the*-% of the word *Democrats* for Democrats (20.0%) is well below that of Republicans (50.0%)—in fact, it is equal to the 25th percentile for Republicans. The plots in Figure 3.1(b) present analogous data for the word *Republicans*. Again, the median values are very far apart, at 42.1% for Democrats and 20.0% for Republicans (only 3.8 percentage-points higher than the 25th percentile for Democrats (16.2%)).



(a) *The*-% for the word *Democrats*

(b) *The*-% for the word *Republicans*

Figure 3.1: HPC speakers' *the*-% by speaker party.

While the patterns are clearly in the predicted direction in both figures, there are some individuals who, at least on the face of things, do not pattern as expected. First, there are a handful of Democrats who had a *the*-% for *Democrats* of 100.0%. However, none of those

individuals had more than two tokens of *the Democrats* in the entire corpus. Similarly, among the few Republicans whose *the-%* for *Republicans* was 100.0%, all but one had no more than two tokens of *the Republicans*, and the single person with more than two (Mac Collins (R-GA)) had only four. These outliers' low token counts preclude any substantive conclusions concerning their use of *the* in talking about their own parties.

There are, however, some individuals with a more substantial number of tokens whose raw *the-%s* do not pattern as expected. Looking first at the Democrats, there are a total of 186 representatives in the corpus who had at least ten tokens of both (*the*) *Democrats* and (*the*) *Republicans*. Among them, only 23 (12.4%)—fewer than one in eight—had a *the-%* for *Democrats* that was greater than or equal to their *the-%* for *Republicans*, and only 15 (8.1%) had a *the-%* for *Democrats* that was more than five percentage-points higher than their *the-%* for *Republicans*. As for the Republicans, of the 174 representatives with at least ten tokens of both (*the*) *Democrats* and (*the*) *Republicans*, only 24 (13.8%)—fewer than one in seven—had at least as great a *the-%* for *Republicans* as for *Democrats*, and only 13 (7.5%) had a *the-%* for *Republicans* that was more than five percentage-points higher than their *the-%* for *Democrats*. These numbers are relatively small, but not negligible. How can we account for the speech of these trend-bucking individuals?

Briefly, there are more factors than speaker party alone that influence a speaker's choice of DP. It is worth noting, for instance, that some of these speakers used *the-DPs* in talking about their own party in indirect quotation, in contexts where a *the-DP* might be expected because the quoted individual is not a member of the relevant party:

- (7) People will say we could solve the problem of deficits if only the Democrats or the Congress would hold down spending.
– Representative Brian Baird (D-WA). 26 February 2003.²
- (8) But in particular I want to respond to the comments that I have heard made in the well of the House by some of my colleagues from across the aisle, in which they have said the Republicans did not participate in passing social security.

²*House Proceedings Corpus.*

– Representative Vernon Ehlers (R-MI). 11 August 1994.³

Other tokens were direct quotations, where the speaker had no choice as to what DP to use (assuming faithfulness to the original source). And still others were issued ironically, such that the speaker mocked the perspective of someone from the opposing party:

- (9) Anyone who objects to doing for Europe what European boys should be doing naturally despises children almost as much as the Republicans hate old folks, and probably roots for measles and chickenpox.

– Representative Robert Dornan (R-CA). 28 November 1995.⁴

Moreover, as noted earlier, *the*-DPs are more likely than BPs to depict the individuals being talked about as a collective or bloc, *ceteris paribus*. This lends *the*-DPs well to statements in which one presents one's party as a unified front, as in the following:

- (10) The Democrats are united on the need for a new direction in Iraq.

– Representative John Larson (D-CT). 26 June 2006.⁵

A speaker whose utterances about her own party were disproportionately influenced by any of these considerations (and there are others) may well have had a higher *the*-% for her own party than for her opposing party, even if she strongly identified with her party. The picture is complicated further when we consider that some speakers have a complex relationship with their party (a matter I will discuss at greater length in the analysis of transcripts from *The McLaughlin Group*). It could be, for example, that Republican John Kasich's (R-OH) relatively high *the*-% for *Republicans* in the HPC is related to his reputation during the relevant time frame for, “[having] always had an independent streak,”⁶ “[having] always had his own views,”⁷ and, “wield[ing] his ax much less selectively than

³*House Proceedings Corpus*.

⁴*House Proceedings Corpus*.

⁵*House Proceedings Corpus*.

⁶Quote from Curt Steiner in Bronson, Peter. “Looking for another boomer president.” *The Cincinnati Enquirer*. 11 October 1998. As cited in “John Kasich.” *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., 2014. Web. Last accessed 1 July 2014. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Kasich.

⁷*Ibid.*

[...] most of his party colleagues”⁸ Having said that, there are many if not more representatives among those with “unexpected” *the*-%s who seem to have little tension with their party.

A detailed examination of the factors underlying the speech of the few representatives who spoke in markedly unexpected ways in the HPC may turn out to be a fruitful study in its own right, but is beyond the scope of this work. For now, to summarize briefly, the great majority of speakers in the HPC patterned as predicted, and it is to be expected that a handful of others did not, given the multiple factors that influence one’s choice of DP.

Modeling the data

To test for statistical significance in the patterns of speech for the two parties, I constructed two generalized linear mixed-effects models, one for talk about Democrats and one for talk about Republicans. The first model was designed to predict whether a given token of *Democrats* occurred as a bare plural or as part of a *the*-DP on the basis of the party of the speaker of the token. That is, the single fixed-effect predictor was speaker party. Because many speakers produced multiple tokens, the identity of the speaker was included in the model as a random effect group with a random-intercept term.⁹ I ran the model with the `glmer()` function in R (Bates et al. 2014; R Core Team 2014). The output of the model is provided in Figure 3.2, where the dependent variable “the” is coded as 1 if the *Democrats*-DP was headed by *the* and 0 if the BP was a bare plural.

There are a couple of key features to the output in Figure 3.2. The first, in the table of fixed effects, is the coefficient on the fixed effect “speaker_partyR”, at 1.125. This

⁸Apple, Jr., R.W. “A Republican with rough edges.” *The New York Times*. 26 April 1998.

⁹The inclusion of a random-slope term based on speaker party has no significant effect on the fit of the model ($\chi^2 = 0.353$; $p = 0.84$). Only four of the more than 800 individuals in the corpus changed their political party during the time frame of the corpus. These individuals were Mike Parker, Nathan Deal, W. Tauzin, and Ralph Hall, all of whom changed from the Democratic Party to the Republican Party. Parker, Deal, and Tauzin changed parties in 1995; Hall, in 2004. None of the speakers had enough tokens to draw any substantial conclusions about their *the*-%s before and after changing parties.

Formula: the ~ speaker_party + (1 | speaker_name)

Random Effects			
Groups	Name	Variance	Std. Dev.
speaker_name	(Intercept)	0.821	0.906

Number of observations: 24,359 Groups: speaker_name, 833

Fixed Effects				
	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(> z)
(Intercept)	-1.210	0.062	-19.56	< 0.001
speaker_partyR	1.125	0.084	13.39	< 0.001

AIC: 29,143 BIC: 29,167 Log Likelihood: -14,568 Deviance: 29,137

Figure 3.2: Results of generalized linear model predicting *the*-DP v. bare plural based on speaker party. Head noun: *Democrats*.

value corresponds to the effect of the speaker being a Republican, rather than a Democrat, in whether the speaker opts for *the*-DP or a BP in talking about Democrats. In this case, given that the estimate for the intercept is -1.210, the model estimates that whereas the probability of a given Democrat using a *the*-DP rather than a BP in talking about Democrats is $e^{-1.210}/(1 + e^{-1.210}) \approx 23.0\%$, the probability of a given Republican doing so is $e^{-1.210+1.125}/(1 + e^{-1.210+1.125}) \approx 47.9\%$. As the table of results shows, the *p*-value for this coefficient is far below 0.001, suggesting that this model is significantly better fit than a model that doesn't take speaker party into account.

As for the random effect of the identity of the speaker, the value of interest is the standard deviation value for the intercept term of speaker_name in the table of random effects. This value can be viewed as a measure of how much speakers of the same party vary in terms of the probability of using a *the*-DP rather than a BP to talk about Democrats. At 0.906, this value is relatively high compared with the coefficient for speaker party (again,

1.125), suggesting that there is a fair amount of inter-speaker variation within parties, as shown in the box plots in Figure 3.1(a). Nonetheless, as also made clear in Figure 3.1(a), the overall effect is indeed robust.

Figure 3.3 presents the result of the analogous model based instead on talk about Republicans. This time the coefficient on “speaker_partyR” is -1.010, suggesting that a given Republican has a lower probability of using a *the*-DP rather than a BP in talking about Republicans than a given Democrat would ($p < 0.001$). In particular, the model predicts that the probability of a given Democrat using a *the*-DP rather than a BP in talking about Republicans is $e^{-0.198}/(1 + e^{-0.198}) \approx 45.1\%$, whereas the probability of a given Republican doing so is $e^{-0.198-1.010}/(1 + e^{-0.198-1.010}) \approx 23.0\%$. As for the random effect of the identity of the speaker, the relevant standard deviation is 0.952, relatively large in magnitude compared to the effect of speaker party—consistent with Figure 3.1(b).¹⁰ Again, however, the effect of speaker party is large and robust nonetheless.

To sum up, the results confirm our hypothesis: Democrats have a much higher *the*-DP for the word *Republicans* than for the word *Democrats*, and vice versa for Republicans. Though there is considerable inter-speaker variation within the parties, the aggregate differences are not merely driven by a few individuals. Rather, the great majority of speakers pattern as expected.

3.2.3 Study 1: Summary, future research

In this section I showed that members of the U.S. House of Representatives tend to have a higher *the*-% when talking about their opposing party than when talking about their own. The relevant differences are massive—for each party taken as a whole, the *the*-% for talk about the opposing party is more than 1.75 times the *the*-% for talk about the speaker’s party. Nor are these differences due to a few individuals. The great majority of speakers in

¹⁰Again, the inclusion of a random-slope term based on speaker party, if appropriate, does not have significant effect on the fit of the model ($\chi^2 = 4.212$; $p = 0.12$).

Formula: the ~ speaker_party + (1 | speaker_name)

Random Effects			
Groups	Name	Variance	Std. Dev.
speaker_name	(Intercept)	0.907	0.952

Number of observations: 30,034 Groups: speaker_name, 829

Fixed Effects				
	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(> z)
(Intercept)	-0.198	0.058	-3.39	< 0.001
speaker_partyR	-1.010	0.085	-11.90	< 0.001

AIC: 35,159 BIC: 35,184 Log Likelihood: -17,577 Deviance: 35,153

Figure 3.3: Results of generalized linear model predicting *the*-DP v. bare plural based on speaker party. Head noun: *Republicans*.

the corpus pattern as expected with respect to these measures.

These results thus support the broader claim that people will generally have a higher *the*-% for talk about groups that they wish to establish or reinforce distance from, and vice versa. It further provides a case in point of the even broader picture concerning the relation between meaning and variation, whereby (i) the use of one form over another is in large part motivated by the differential statements that the two forms make; and (ii) correlations between any two social groups and linguistic variation largely correspond to principled differences in the communicative goals of members of the two groups. In this case, members of two political parties are more likely to talk about the two parties in a way consistent with their fellow party-members than with members of the opposing party.

By way of closing this section, two additional points. First, the speech of representatives who did not conform to the predicted trend merits further investigation. Second, and relatedly, the great size of the HPC makes it an ideal locus for research on what other

factors relate to the choice between *the*-DPs and BPs. For example, it appears that conjoining the names of the two parties strongly favors BP variants—i.e., that *Republicans and Democrats*, for instance, is far more commonly said in the corpus than *the Republicans and (the) Democrats*. It also seems that such conjunctions may be disproportionately employed in statements encouraging cooperation between the parties, as in (11).

- (11) a. I urge my colleagues, Democrats and Republicans alike, to come together in support of this motion.
 – Representative David Dreier (R-CA). 1 May 2008.¹¹
- b. Speaker, I look forward to working with Republicans and Democrats to address this issue.
 – Representative Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA). 4 June 2009.¹²

These tendencies, if they indeed hold, might be linked to the differences between *the*-DPs and BPs highlighted in Chapter 2. In particular, while *the*-DPs draw lines in the domain of discourse, in virtue of their definitively picking out particular, object-level individuals, BPs, which do not pick out well-defined object-level individuals, draw no such sharp divisions in the domain of discourse. I leave an exploration of this possibility—and of additional factors bound up with variation in the use of *the*-DPs and BPs—for future work.

The HPC, given the highly partisan nature of congressional discourse, offers an ideal site for seeing the social meaning of interest in action. But there are lessons to be learned from examining the same basic questions in a corpus that differs from the HPC in important ways. For that, I turn to the study of talk about Democrats and Republicans on the political talk show *The McLaughlin Group*.

¹¹*House Proceedings Corpus.*

¹²*House Proceedings Corpus.*

3.3 Study 2: *The use on The McLaughlin Group*

3.3.1 The present corpus and its relation to the HPC

The McLaughlin Group Corpus

In this second study, I examine the use of *the*-DPs and BPs for talk about Democrats and Republicans on the political talk show *The McLaughlin Group*. First aired in 1982, *The McLaughlin Group* is a weekly program that features a round-table discussion of current events, mostly political, among five pundits. One of the five pundits is always John McLaughlin, journalist, former speechwriter and assistant to President Richard Nixon and President Gerald Ford, and host and producer of the program. There is a great deal of overlap from one episode to the next in terms of the other four pundits, though there is certainly some variation. Each thirty-minute program (typically edited down to roughly 27-28 minutes for television) involves fast-paced and lively discussion of a handful of topical issues, posed in sequence by McLaughlin, who moderates the discussion and adds his own commentary. The corpus for the following analysis—henceforth *The McLaughlin Group Corpus* (MGC)—is comprised of 154 consecutive episodes of the program from the period spanning May 23, 1998 through May 13, 2011. The MGC contains over 700,000 spoken words from over 700 different speakers.

Important differences between the corpora

There are (at least) two important differences between the MGC and the HPC as far as the phenomenon of interest is concerned. First, whereas the HPC consists in the speech of individuals transparently speaking as members of their respective parties, the MGC instead involves some pressure on the speakers not to show too much personal political bias. Conversely, active politicians, such as the speakers in the HPC, face pressure to align themselves with a particular political party *per se*. Of course, politicians don't always speak in

ways that align themselves with the parties they serve either—witness Republican Senator Ted Cruz’s (R-TX) widely discussed proclamation: “I don’t trust the Republicans.” Nonetheless, it seems clear that there are different expectations for pundits and politicians concerning toeing the party line. The second key difference, related to the first, is that the pundits in the MGC, in talking about Democrats and Republicans, are often in fact talking about Democratic and Republican politicians in particular, and none of the pundits was serving as an elected official during the time span of the MGC. In the HPC, however, the speakers are not only Democrats and Republicans, but Democratic and Republican politicians speaking as such. In this way, speakers in the MGC are often not exactly members of the groups being talked about, despite whatever political affiliations they have.

I will have more to say on these differences further on. For now, let’s turn to the predictions for this study.

Predictions

The principle prediction for this study is essentially the same as for the study of the HPC. Specifically, we should expect that speakers will have a higher *the-%* for talking about groups of which they are not members than for talking about groups of which they are. But, given the considerations discussed above, we can make additional predictions as well. First of all, there is pressure in the MGC for speakers to temper their political biases, which suggests that the difference in *the-%s* for talk about Democrats and Republicans will generally be narrower for a given speaker in the MGC, given that stark differences in the two *the-%s* would suggest a strong bias in favor of one party over the other. Second, given that the speakers in the MGC, more so than those in the HPC, are often commenting on groups that they are not properly part of, we should expect that speakers in the MGC will generally have higher *the-%s* when talking about either party, all other things being equal. As I will show in what follows, these predictions are borne out.

3.3.2 Introducing the speakers

For this study I analyzed the speech of the eight participants on the show who appeared on at least 25 of the 154 episodes in the MGC. These participants and the number of episodes on which they appeared are given in Table 3.2.

Speaker	# of Appearances	% of 154 Episodes
John McLaughlin	154	100%
Eleanor Clift	147	95.5%
Tony Blankley	117	76.0%
Michael Barone	81	52.6%
Lawrence O'Donnell	54	35.1%
Pat Buchanan	40	26.0%
Larry Kudlow	40	26.0%
Clarence Page	33	21.4%

Table 3.2: MGC participants appearing in at least 25 episodes.

None of these participants was serving as an elected official at the same time as appearing on the show during the relevant period. Nonetheless, if it is true that *the*-DPs, relative to BPs, distance a speaker from the group they are talking about, then we should expect to see that Republican-oriented speakers should have a higher *the*-% for *Democrats* than *Republicans* and vice versa. In order to test this claim, we need some information about the personal politics of the eight participants of interest. It is of course a challenge to find or develop an objective characterization of an individual's political leanings. For the purposes of this work, I will draw my characterizations primarily from the Wikipedia articles on the relevant individuals and provide some support of the characterizations from additional sources:

Michael Barone: Wikipedia describes Barone as, “an American conservative political analyst, pundit, and journalist.”¹³ During the time period under consideration, Barone served

¹³“Michael Barone (pundit).” *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., 2014. Web. Last accessed 19 May 2014. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Barone_\(pundit\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Barone_(pundit)).

as a senior writer for *US News & World Report*. He currently serves as Senior Political Analyst for the *Washington Examiner* and is a resident fellow of the American Enterprise Institute, both widely regarded as conservative organizations. He is also a contributor to the Fox News Channel, a conservative media outlet.

Tony Blankley: Wikipedia describes Blankley as, “an English-American political analyst who gained fame as the press secretary for [Republican Speaker of the House] Newt Gingrich.”¹⁴ Blankley worked for Gingrich from 1990 to 1997, after which time he joined the staff of the *Washington Times*. In 2011 he suggested that Gingrich was the best candidate for the 2012 presidential election.¹⁵

Pat Buchanan: Wikipedia describes Buchanan as, “an American conservative political commentator, author, syndicated columnist, politician, and broadcaster.”¹⁶ Buchanan served as a senior adviser to Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford and Ronald Reagan, and made three bids as a candidate for president of the United States, seeking the nomination of the Republican Party for the 1992 and 1996 elections, and running as the Reform Party candidate in 2000.

Eleanor Clift: Wikipedia describes Clift as, “a liberal political reporter, television pundit, and author.” According to the article, “during the Clinton Administration [1993-2000], she was jokingly referred to as Eleanor ‘Rodham’ Clift or Eleanor ‘Rodham Clifton,’ because of her fierce defense of Hillary Rodham Clinton and Bill Clinton.”¹⁷

Lawrence “Larry” Kudlow: Wikipedia describes Kudlow as, “an American economist, television personality, and newspaper columnist.”¹⁸ Kudlow’s website describes him as a

¹⁴“Tony Blankley.” *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., 2014. Web. Last accessed 19 May 2014. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tony_Blankley.

¹⁵Clymer, Adam. “Tony Blankley, Gingrich aide and columnist, dies at 63.” *New York Times*. 8 January 2012.

¹⁶“Pat Buchanan.” *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., 2014. Web. Last accessed 19 May 2014. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pat_Buchanan.

¹⁷“Eleanor Clift.” *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., 2014. Web. Last accessed 19 May 2014. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eleanor_Clift.

¹⁸“Lawrence Alan “Larry” Kudlow.” *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., 2014. Web. Last accessed 19 May 2014. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lawrence_Kudlow.

“free market, supply-side economist.” He is the author of the 2004 book *Bullish On Bush: How George Bush’s Ownership Society Will Make America Stronger*.

John McLaughlin: Wikipedia describes McLaughlin as, “an American television personality and political commentator.”¹⁹ According to the article, “McLaughlin is a longtime Republican. However, leading up to the 2004 presidential election, McLaughlin announced that he would be voting for Democratic Party candidate John Kerry.”

Lawrence O’Donnell: Wikipedia describes O’Donnell as, “an American political analyst, journalist, actor, producer, writer, and host of *The Last Word with Lawrence O’Donnell*, a weeknight MSNBC opinion and news program.”²⁰ In a 2010 interview on MSNBC’s *Morning Joe* in which his liberalism was questioned, O’Donnell described his politics as follows: “. . . I am not a progressive. I am not a liberal who is so afraid of the word that I had to change my name to progressive. Liberals amuse me. I am a socialist. I live to the extreme left, the extreme left of you mere liberals, okay?”²¹ A year later, on his MSNBC program O’Donnell explained: “my full truth is I am as much a capitalist as I am a socialist; but [. . .] I feel more compelled to stand up for the socialist side of me.”²²

Clarence Page: Wikipedia describes Page as, “an American journalist, syndicated columnist, and senior member of *The Chicago Tribune* editorial board.”²³ On his website at *The Chicago Tribune*, Page describes himself as follows: “My views? I’m a proud factory-town liberal who nevertheless will surprise you from time to time – because liberals just l-o-o-o-v-e to criticize other liberals.”²⁴

¹⁹“John McLaughlin (host).” *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., 2014. Web. Last accessed 19 May 2014. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_McLaughlin_\(host\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_McLaughlin_(host)).

²⁰“Lawrence O’Donnell.” *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., 2014. Web. Last accessed 20 May 2014. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lawrence_O'Donnell_\(host\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lawrence_O'Donnell_(host)).

²¹Mirkinson, Jack. “Lawrence O’Donnell calls himself a ‘socialist,’ slams Glenn Greenwald on ‘Morning Joe.’” *Huffington Post*. 11 November 2010. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/11/06/lawrence-odonnell-calls-h_n_779909.html.

²²“Lawrence O’Donnell.” *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., 2014. Web. Last accessed 20 May 2014. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lawrence_O'Donnell_\(host\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lawrence_O'Donnell_(host)).

²³“Clarence Page.” *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., 2014. Web. Last accessed 19 May 2014. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clarence_Page.

²⁴Page, Clarence. Page’s Page. *The Chicago Tribune*. Last accessed 20 May 2014. <http://www>.

Participant	Leaning	Description of Political Leanings/Affiliations
John McLaughlin	Conserv.	“longtime Republican”; announced he would vote for Democrat John Kerry for president in 2004
Tony Blankley	Conserv.	“conservative political analyst”; press secretary for Newt Gingrich, 1990-1997
Michael Barone	Conserv.	“conservative political analyst”; resident fellow of the American Enterprise Institute
Pat Buchanan	Conserv.	“conservative political commentator”; ran for Republican presidential nomination in 1992 and 1996 and for Reform nomination in 2000
Larry Kudlow	Conserv.	self-described as a “free market, supply-side economist”; author of <i>Bullish on Bush</i>
Eleanor Clift	Liberal	“liberal political reporter”; “fierce defen[der] of Hillary Rodham Clinton and Bill Clinton”
Lawrence O’Donnell	Liberal	self-described as a “socialist” but also stated he is “as much a capitalist as [he is] a socialist”
Clarence Page	Liberal	self described as “a proud factory-town liberal who nevertheless will surprise you from time to time”

Table 3.3: Political leanings of MGC participants of interest, ordered by leaning and number of appearances on the program.

Table 3.3 provides concise descriptions of the political leanings of the eight participants. On the basis of these descriptions, the hypothesis is that McLaughlin (a “longtime Republican”), Blankley (press secretary for Republican Newt Gingrich), Barone (“conservative political analyst”), Buchanan (campaigner for Republican presidential nomination) and Kudlow, (“supply-side economist” and Bush supporter) being Republicans or conservatives (or both) would have a higher *the-%* for *Democrats* than for *Republicans*—and vice versa for Clift (“liberal political reporter” and Clinton supporter), O’Donnell (self-described “socialist”), and Page (“proud factory-town liberal”).

chicagotribune.com/news/opinion/page/.

3.3.3 A warm up: (*The*) *Americans*

Before turning to the analysis of *Democrats* and *Republicans*, let's check to make sure that the speakers are generally behaving as expected in this corpus. On the picture of the social meaning of *the* developed in Chapter 2, given that all of the eight participants of interest are U.S. citizens, we should expect that their *the*-% of *Americans* will be lower than their *the*-% for terms corresponding to other nationalities.

To test this claim, I counted the number of tokens of the BP *Americans* and the *the*-DP *the Americans* spoken by the eight participants of interest in the MGC. As in the case of the HPC analysis, only those tokens that were unmodified both pre- and post-nominally were included in the analysis (e.g., tokens like *African Americans* and *Americans who own homes* were excluded) so that *the*-%s could be calculated on the basis of DPs that were identical except for the presence or absence of the determiner *the*. Because of the smaller size of the MGC, I was able to analyze each potential token by hand. In total there were 89 unmodified tokens of *Americans* and ten of *the Americans*, for a *the*-% of 10.1% across the eight participants.

As a comparison point, I repeated the same steps for the DPs corresponding to those countries for which there were data among the world's twenty most populous countries. For instance, there were five tokens of the BP *Russians* and 76 of *the Russians*, for a *the*-% of 93.8%—over nine times the *the*-% for *Americans*. The data are relatively sparse for other nationalities, but the pattern is clear. Table 3.4 displays the *the*-%s for those countries for which there were data among the world's 20 most populous countries. Nationality terms that do not follow the *Xs* - *the Xs* paradigm (e.g., *Japanese people*, *the Japanese*) were not considered.

In accordance with the discussion in the Chapter 2, the conditions are perfect for using a *the*-DP rather than a BP—with the exception of the term *Americans*, the speakers are talking about groups of individuals of which they are non-members, and, in the context

Nationality	BP tokens	<i>the Xs</i> tokens	Sum	<i>the</i> -%
<i>Americans</i>	89	10	99	10.1%
All non-Americans	8	87	95	91.6%
<i>Pakistanis</i>	0	3	3	100.0%
<i>Russians</i>	5	76	81	93.8%
<i>Germans</i>	2	6	8	75.0%
<i>Iranians</i>	0	1	1	100.0%
<i>Turks</i>	1	1	2	50.0%

Table 3.4: *The*-%s of nationality terms for MGC participants of interest: Twenty most populous nations (nations with no tokens not depicted).

of discussing world politics, the groups being talked about are relevant as collectives, so a DP of the form *the Xs* is less likely to be misinterpreted as referring to a particular, proper subset of Xs than we might expect with other nouns (e.g., *the cats*). These factors all favor the use of a *the*-DP, consistent with the numbers in the table.

3.3.4 Talk about *Democrats* and *Republicans*

So the results pattern as expected when it comes to nationality terms. But what about political parties? Do participants on *The McLaughlin Group* talk about Republicans and Democrats in a way that conforms to their personal politics?

Method

To test this hypothesis, for each of the eight participants, I collected every token of *the Democrats*, *the Republicans* and BP *Democrats* and *Republicans*. Again, I excluded all cases in which the noun of interest was modified (e.g., *Republicans in the Senate*, *liberal Democrats*) for the sake of comparability. I retained tokens for which the DP of interest was the object of the word *of*, provided that either a BP or *the*-DP would be grammatical in the relevant context. For example, *a lot of Democrats* was included, given that *a lot of the Democrats* is likewise grammatical, but *some/many/etc. Democrats* was excluded

because *some/many/etc. the Democrats* is ungrammatical. Including such tokens did not change the results in any appreciable way. I then calculated for each participant the *the-%* of *Democrats* and *Republicans* on the basis of these tokens.

Results

Table 3.5 presents the results of these calculations, including the overall number of tokens of *(the) Democrats* and *(the) Republicans* in the sample. On the present theory, a higher *the-%* for *Democrats* than for *Republicans* suggests closer affiliation with Republicans than with Democrats, and vice versa.

Participant	Leaning	<i>Dem the-%</i>	<i>Rep the-%</i>	<i>Dem N</i>	<i>Rep N</i>
John McLaughlin	Conserv.	52.7%	46.4%	205	209
Tony Blankley	Conserv.	80.8%	52.9%	73	85
Michael Barone	Conserv.	66.0%	52.8%	47	36
Pat Buchanan	Conserv.	71.4%	70.3%	14	37
Larry Kudlow	Conserv.	61.1%	50.0%	18	16
Eleanor Clift	Liberal	60.0%	61.6%	105	146
Lawrence O'Donnell	Liberal	52.6%	50.0%	19	20
Clarence Page	Liberal	26.7%	66.7%	15	15
Conservative Participants		61.3%	50.9%	357	383
Liberal Participants		55.4%	60.8%	139	181

Table 3.5: *The-%s* for MGC participants of interest, ordered by political leaning and number of appearances on the program.

As the table shows, the results for seven of the eight participants are in the direction expected. Host John McLaughlin and his four fellow conservative-leaning participants all have a higher *the-%* for *Democrats* than for *Republicans*. Similarly, the liberal-leaning Clift and Page both have higher *the-%* for *Republicans* than for *Democrats*. The differences are especially impressive for Blankley and Page, both over 25 percentage-points. Moreover, when the participants' tokens are grouped together on the basis of the participants' political leanings, the results clearly come out as expected: for the conservative-leaning

participants, the aggregate *the*-DP for *Democrats* is 61.3%, compared with 50.9% for *Republicans*; whereas for the liberal-leaning participants, the respective values are 55.4% and 60.8%.

So things pattern as predicted in the MGC relative to the central hypothesis of this chapter. Having said that, the results in Table 3.5 have a few important features that call for further commentary.

High *the*-%s and the observer role

First, notice that the *the*-%s were generally much higher in the MGC than in the HPC. In fact, the average *the*-% for *Republicans* for conservative-leaning participants in the MGC, at 50.9% is nearly as high the average *the*-% for *Democrats* among Republican speakers in the HPC, 53.3%. Even more remarkable, the average *the*-% for *Democrats* for liberal-leaning participants in the MGC, at 55.4%, was actually higher than the average *the*-% for *Republicans* among Democratic speakers in the HPC, 54.4%.

The higher *the*-%s in the MGC are to be expected. Unlike the speakers in the HPC, who are active, politically affiliated participants speaking as such, the participants in the MGC nominally speak as observers of the political world. Moreover, in cases in which talk about “Democrats” and “Republicans” is really talk about active politicians who are Democrats and Republicans, participants in the MGC—unlike those in the HPC—are talking about categories of which they are not members. Consider the following quote from McLaughlin, talking about the potential impeachment of then president Bill Clinton, in which he is clearly talking about Democrats and Republicans in Congress:

(12) In other words, that is the Republicans voting against impeachment and the Democrats voting for it.²⁵

In brief, because they are speaking from an observer’s perspective, which involves a sort of

²⁵11 December 1998 episode. *The McLaughlin Group*. First aired 12 December 1998. Transcript available at <http://www.mclaughlin.com/transcript.htm?id=63>.

removedness from what is being talked about, participants in the MGC are more likely to use forms that mark distance from the relevant groups than speakers in the HPC. In turn, we should expect to see higher *the-%s* in talk about the Democrats and Republicans in the MGC than in the HPC.

Related to the matter of the role of the observer is the issue of objectivity, to which I now turn.

Narrow margins and objectivity

Recall that in the HPC, for both parties the *the-%* for the opposing party-term was over 1.75 times higher than the *the-%* for their own party-term. In contrast, in the MGC the corresponding ratios, though greater than 1, were below 1.25 for both the liberal-leaning and the conservative-leaning groups of participants. Relatedly, for some speakers the difference between the *the-%s* for the two party-terms is rather small even if in the expected direction. For both Clift and Buchanan, for instance, the difference is less than two percentage-points. The difference for McLaughlin is not especially large either, at 6.3 percentage-points.

But these narrow margins should not come as a major surprise. Though the participants' political views and leanings are mutually known, the ethic of the program calls for participants to at least make a show of objectivity and non-partisanship as regards the two parties. The following exchange from July 10, 1998 episode of the program illustrates:

(13) **McLaughlin:** The elections for the House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate, as noted, are four months away. Have the Republicans already out-strategized the Democrats? Tony Blankley?

Blankley: In the interest of honest journalism, I don't think we've out-strategized the Democrats since 1994. However, I think the Republicans are sort of stumbling into a defensible position [...] So I think while we haven't out-strategized the Democrats, we're in a pretty useful position.

McLaughlin: Why do you keep saying "we"? [Laughter.] Are you identifying yourself with Republicans now, that you have a new ephiany [sic]? I mean, I'm not talking about your clothing, I'm talking about the fact that you are an analytic

journalist. You're like Pat Buchanan, and Pat would never identify himself as being a Republican – a “we”.

Blankley: I do not fly under false flags. I am a conservative.²⁶

In the conservative Tony Blankley's response in the exchange in (13), he explicitly marks an attempt at dispassion, saying, “In the interest of honest journalism” before painting Republicans in an unfavorable light. Yet, in spite of his gesture toward objectivity, he more than once refers to Republicans as “we.” McLaughlin pokes fun at Blankley on the basis of his first-person forms, saying that co-participant and fellow conservative Pat Buchanan, as an analytic journalist, would refrain from using “we” to talk about Republicans.

Indeed, Buchanan's choices for talking about the two parties suggest an air of detachment from both—his *the*-% for *Republicans* is higher than any other participant's, at 70.3%, and his *the*-% for *Democrats* is second highest, at 71.4%.²⁷ Blankley's *the*-%s, on the other hand, are consistent with his use of “we” in the exchange in (13)—he has the highest *the*-% for *Democrats* of all of the participants, at 80.8%, and has a much lower *the*-% for *Republicans*, at 52.9%. The following Blankley quote from an October 22, 1999 episode of the program exemplifies his speech pattern. Within the same sentence Blankley uses a *the*-DP in talking about Democrats and a BP in talking about Republicans:

(14) As you get near the end of an administration, the Congress of the other party invariably gets tougher. That's what the Democrats did to Republicans.²⁸

More generally, instances of *we* as a term to talk about a party are rare in the corpus,

²⁶10 July 1998 episode. *The McLaughlin Group*. First aired 11 July 1998. Transcript available at <http://www.mclaughlin.com/transcript.htm?id=40>.

²⁷Having said that, it should be noted that there is one case in the corpus where Buchanan clearly uses *we* as co-referential with (*the*) *Republicans*, from an October 30, 1998 episode of the program: “We will gain a net of four [governors] – the Republicans will, John. We're going to pick up Florida. Jeb Bush is going to win very, very big. We're going to pick up Georgia. We're going to pick up Nebraska and Nevada and Hawaii. I'm afraid we're going to lose the great state of California [...]” <http://www.mclaughlin.com/transcript.htm?id=56>.

²⁸22 October 1999 episode. *The McLaughlin Group*. First aired 23 October 1999. Transcript available at <http://www.mclaughlin.com/transcript.htm?id=112>.

and at least some efforts are needed to avoid them. McLaughlin's swift self-editing in the following quote is telling—he moves up a cline of objectivity from a first-person to a third-person to an entirely impersonal form in quick succession:

- (15) **McLaughlin:** How many breakaway Republicans will there be who will vote against impeachment? *We need or they need or is needed* 218 votes. They have 228 votes in the Congress – in the House. [emphasis added]²⁹

The liberal-leaning Clift's dance in (16) illustrates the same general principle of avoiding explicit affiliation with either party. Having caught herself sounding perhaps too subjective, she follows up her first-person "music to my ears," with an impersonal conditional with a *the*-DP: "if you want the Democrats to win."

- (16) **Clift:** It was delicious this week listening to the Republicans complain this ticket is too centrist, that –

Page: Too close to George Bush.

Clift: Right, it's too close to George Bush. I mean, music to my ears, if you want the Democrats to win.³⁰

Nor, in keeping with this principle, are there any tokens of *we Democrats* or *we Republicans* in the corpus. Such DPs would violate conversational expectations especially strongly in this context: not only do they score poorly in terms of impartiality given their their entailments, they also lack the mitigating traits of simplicity and frequency held by bare *we*.

So, on the basis of expectations of objectivity alone, it is to be expected that the *the*-% differences are somewhat small for some of the participants.

²⁹4 December 1998 episode. *The McLaughlin Group*. First aired 5 December 1998. Transcript available at <http://www.mclaughlin.com/transcript.htm?id=62>.

³⁰11 August 2000 episode. *The McLaughlin Group*. First aired 12 August 2000. Transcript available at <http://www.mclaughlin.com/transcript.htm?id=160>.

Complexities in party affiliation

But there is another important reason why the *the-%* differences are especially small for certain participants. Specifically, some of the participants have a rather complex relationship with the party most closely matching their political leanings.

Let's take the case of Buchanan, for instance. If we may assume a basic mapping between conservatism and the Republican Party on one hand and liberalism and the Democratic Party on the other, then we ought also to expect that Buchanan, a clear conservative, would have a substantially higher *the-%* for *Democrats* than for *Republicans*. But, as already mentioned, he does not. This could be attributed not only to pressures to present an objective front, but also to an imperfect correspondence between conservatism and Republicanism.

Buchanan, though certainly conservative, was often at odds with the Republican Party in the 1990s and early 2000s. He made two bids for the Republican nomination for president of the U.S. during that time period. The first bid was in the 1992 election, during which he campaigned for the Republican nomination against incumbent President George H.W. Bush, as an alternative to “the establishment game.”³¹ Buchanan ran for the Republican nomination a second time in 1996, again as a more conservative alternative to the Republican “establishment,” declaring in a rally: “We shocked them [. . .] They are in a terminal panic. They hear the shouts of the peasants from over the hill. All the knights and barons will be riding into the castle pulling up the drawbridge in a minute. All the peasants are coming with pitchforks.”³²

Buchanan's tension with the Republican party did not end there. In October 1999—in the middle of the period of time covered by the MGC—after two failed attempts to earn

³¹“Pat Buchanan.” *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., 2014. Web. Last accessed 22 May 2014. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pat_Buchanan. First quoted in: Allen, Henry. “The iron fist of Pat Buchanan: The GOP brawler, tapping voters' anger.” *The Washington Post*. 17 February 1992.

³²*Ibid.* First quoted in: Knowlton, Brian. “Republicans wind up bare-fisted donnybrook in New Hampshire.” *New York Times*. 20 February 1996.

the Republican Party's nomination for president, Buchanan officially left the Republican Party to run as the Reform Party candidate in 2000. In a speech declaring his candidacy, Buchanan stated:

Today I am ending my lifelong membership in the Republican Party and my campaign for its nomination, and I am declaring my intention to seek the nomination of the Reform Party for the Presidency of the United States of America [...] Our two parties have become nothing but two wings on the same bird of prey [...] The day of the outsider is over, and the beltway parties, the money men, have seen to that.³³

Buchanan's diction paints him as neither Democrat nor Republican—an “outsider” to both parties, consistent with his *the-%s* for both party-terms in the MGC. The following exchange from a 2004 episode of *The McLaughlin Group* (outside of the date range of the MGC) suggests that Buchanan's tensions with the Republican Party continued into the 2000s. The participants are discussing who they plan to vote for in the 2004 presidential election:

(17) **McLaughlin:** You mean coming home to the Republican Party? Are you trying to claw your way back into the Republican Party, Pat?

[...]

Buchanan: [...] I'm going over here with our crowd for this battle. And after this is over, there's going to be a battle for the soul of the Republican Party, and the authentic conservatives will take it back from the neocons, as I pointed out in my book, “Where the Right Went Wrong.”

McLaughlin: So you're trying to make good with the Republicans. Is that it?

Buchanan: No, it is not it, John. You've got to choose, and I choose Bush.³⁴

With all that in mind, it is quite plausible that the similarity between Buchanan's *the-%s* for *Democrats* and *Republicans* is indicative not only of an attempt to appear objective, but also of an intensely strained relationship with his own party.

³³<http://www.gwu.edu/~action/buchref.html>

³⁴22 October 2004 episode. *The McLaughlin Group*. First aired 22 October 2004. Transcript available at <http://www.mclaughlin.com/transcript.htm?id=437>.

The single exception to the hypothesis in Lawrence O’Donnell’s usage may have a similar explanation, as O’Donnell’s generally liberal politics do not necessarily translate into an alignment with the Democratic Party. We saw evidence of this already in O’Donnell’s claim that he “live[s] to the extreme left of [...] mere liberals,” suggesting distance from both of the two principal political parties in the U.S. Thus, the fact that his *the*-% is slightly higher for *Democrats* (52.6%) than for *Republicans* (50.0%) (to the extent that a difference so minor is at all remarkable) may not be counter evidence to the current theory. Indeed, it is possible that speakers have to work especially hard to distance themselves from groups of which they are a part, and may in turn have higher *the*-%s for talk about such groups than for talk about groups toward which their opposition is taken for granted—a possibility worth pursuing in future work.

3.3.5 Study 2: Summary

The results of this study offer further support for the claim that *the*-DPs relative to BPs tend to distance the speaker from the group being talked about, and can therefore be used as tools for marking or reinforcing such distance. In the present case, on the hypothesis that liberalism and conservatism map roughly to Democrats and Republicans, respectively, seven of the eight participants in the MGC patterned as expected as regards talk about the two parties—i.e., conservative-leaning participants had a higher *the*-% for *Democrats* and liberal-leaning participants for *Republicans*. In contrast to the results of the HPC corpus, the overall *the*-%s were rather high, and the gaps between the *the*-%s for the two party-terms were far lower. As discussed above, however, these differences are to be expected, given both the differences in genre and the differences in personae in the two corpora. Whereas speakers in the HPC were acting explicitly as members of their respective parties, speakers in the MGC were instead serving as observers and commentators, which in part involves assuming a measure of distance from the action being discussed and reckoning

with expectations of objectivity. I further showed that the narrow gaps in *the*-%s for particular speakers may also be traced to the complexity of their relationships with their nominal “home” party.

3.4 Chapter summary

In this chapter I have presented two studies of variation in the use of *the*-DPs and BPs to talk about Democrats and Republicans. In both cases I presented evidence that speakers generally use *the*-DPs rather than BPs more often in talking about about groups of which they are not members or with respect to which they wish to express distance. In the House Proceedings Corpus, the predicted differences were dramatic: for Democrats as a group, the *the*-% of *Republicans* was over 1.75 times that of *Democrats*, and vice versa for Republicans. The differences for participants on *The McLaughlin Group* were smaller, but still as predicted. In addition to supporting the narrow hypothesis concerning use of *the*-DPs and BPs in particular, these studies further support the broader theoretical perspective whereby principled variation in the use of a given form depends in large part on the utility of the form relative to principled differences in the goals of speakers in meaningfully different groups or situations. In this case, the idea is that members of the same political party will generally share an affiliative orientation toward their own party and a distant orientation toward opposing parties; and, in turn, insofar as *the*-DPs, relative to BPs, are a handy tool for marking distance from a group, members of the same party will use that tool in a similar manner: employing it more often in talk about their opposing party than in talking about their own.

The discussion in this chapter also showcases the benefits of examining more than one corpus. That *the*-%s were generally higher and closer together for participants in the MGC highlights the importance of contextual considerations—in this case, expectations of objectivity (or lack thereof) and differences in the social role of the speakers (observer, actor,

etc.) from one corpus to the next. Moreover, examination of the speech, character traits, and social positioning of particular individuals, especially given the wide range of interspeaker variation in the use of *the*-DPs and BPs, adds further to our understanding of the social meaning of interest and its relation to the social world. The apparent exceptions or near exceptions to the predicted pattern in Lawrence O'Donnell and Pat Buchanan, for instance, may not be exceptions at all. Rather, they may well reflect that both individuals have unconventional relationships with the large political party closest to their own politics. The speech of these two individuals further underscores the fact that nominal membership in a particular social category does not entail alignment with the category, whether that category is based on age, ethnicity, politics, gender, economics, or what have you. Further investigations of the speech of particular individuals and the role of other linguistic and social factors bound up with the use of *the*-DPs and BPs will be crucial for a fuller understanding of the dynamics underlying the speaker-nonmembership and distancing effects of *the*-DPs.

Chapter 4

On the social meanings of demonstratives

4.1 Introduction

The focus of this chapter is on the English demonstratives *this* and *that* and their plural counterparts *these* and *those*. In this chapter, I will discuss three social meanings associated with demonstratives—specifically, speaker exclamation, speaker evaluation, and shared experience and perspective between interlocutors—and explain why demonstratives have these social meanings in particular, using the socio-pragmatic framework developed in Chapter 1. As with the speaker-nonmembership effect of *the*-DPs, I claim that the effects of interest here have their origin in the features that distinguish demonstratives from other, functionally related expressions, in keeping with the FS Principle. Furthermore, in light of the VE Principle, I claim that the effects are especially potent where a demonstrative runs up against conversational expectations—in particular, where a demonstrative adds syntactic and semantic complexity beyond what is necessary for the purposes of conveying descriptive content.

As with the discussion of *the*-DPs, I do not presume that language users derive the

social meanings of interest from the ground of entailed content up with every use. Rather, as expressed in the AE Principle, I hold that the associations of a given form constitute an important part of its content, and that such content figures into the interpretation of a given use of that form. (Moreover, given that markedness and expectations are intertwined with prior exposure to particular forms and situations, associations are built into the theory.) In any case, the discussion presented herein can be understood as an account of why the relevant meanings might arise in context and/or why those meanings might come to be associated with demonstratives over time.

In Chapter 2, I gave only a brief overview of the content of demonstratives. Because it plays a crucial role in the analysis, I will begin this chapter with a more in-depth discussion of their content. I will then discuss each of the three social meanings of interest in this chapter in turn.

4.2 More on the content of demonstratives

4.2.1 A refresher on the basics

Recall from Chapter 2 that demonstrative-DPs (on their typical, definite interpretations) are rather similar to *the*-DPs and third-person pronouns (Roberts 2002; Wolter 2006; Elbourne 2008), in that they bear no person features and pick out particular individuals. But they are also importantly different from all other English DPs, third-person or not, in that they fundamentally involve locating an individual in a particular, contextually determined situation. The “proximal” *this* is further different from other expressions in that it includes a presupposition that the individual is suitably accessible to the speaker (in a sense to be made more clear shortly). These distinguishing characteristics of demonstratives were displayed in Table 2.1. I now turn to a full discussion of these matters, as promised in Section 2.2.4.¹

¹To keep things simple, I will talk in terms of speakers rather than agents of speech acts. For commentary on why to separate the two for certain special cases, see Elbourne (2008).

4.2.2 Demonstratives and indexes

Following Nunberg (1993) and Elbourne (2008), I hold that the interpretation of a given demonstrative, like that of a first-person or second-person form is tied to some contextually relevant entity or *index* that stands in a contextually relevant relation to the interpretation. As noted in Chapter 2, this use of the term *index* should not be confused with its use in the sociolinguistic literature, though the two are fundamentally related. The idea behind the present use of the term is that such entities point, so to speak, to the ultimate interpretation of the demonstrative-headed DP (Nunberg 1993).

In the default case, the index is the ultimate interpretation itself, so that the relevant relation is simply one of identity. But there are examples for which the two are clearly distinguished, which can be found where the choice of *this* or *that* seems to clash with the location of the intended referent. Consider the following:

- (1) [Valet-parking manager talking to a valet-parking attendant, holding up a car key.]

This one is parked out back. (Nunberg 1995 (1), modified slightly)

Here we have the use of the “proximal” *this* to talk about something (namely, a particular car) that is presumably at a considerable distance from the speaker. This is straightforwardly accounted for under an indexical theory of demonstratives. The claim is that in using demonstratives it is the location of the index that is relevant to whether *this* or *that* is employed, rather than the location of the intended referent. In this case, the index, which is distinct from the intended referent, is the car key rather than the car itself—hence *this* is licensed despite the distance between the speaker and the intended referent. As an index, the car key points, as it were, to the car it corresponds to. Example (2) makes a similar point: the speaker uses the “proximal” demonstrative to talk about things that are farther away than what she uses the “distal” demonstrative to talk about.

(2) [A salesperson in a china shop talking to a customer.]

These [holding up a plate] are over at the warehouse, but those [indicating a plate across the room] I have in stock here. (Nunberg 1993 (43), modified slightly)

In short, every use of a demonstrative is tied to an index that points to the ultimate interpretation. By default, the index and the interpretation are identical, but this is not always the case. The choice of using *this* rather than *that* (or vice versa) always depends on the index.

4.2.3 The defining feature of demonstratives: Locating parameters

Following Wolter (2006) I hold that the denotation of demonstratives includes a context-sensitive situation parameter, which I will call a *locating parameter*, whose function is to provide a search space—physical or abstract—in which to find the index. That is, the use of a demonstrative requires that the speaker and addressee converge on some situation in which the index of the demonstrative is to be found. Demonstratives, says Wolter (2006: 4), “indicate that a domain shift is necessary in order for reference to succeed.” In essence, the idea is that demonstratives serve to say to the addressee, “Look away from (or at a subpart of) the space where you’re currently looking to find the specific individual I’m talking about.” It is this feature of demonstratives as a class that sets them apart from all of the other expressions of interest. To this point, demonstratives that do not appear to belong to a paradigm marking deictic contrast (e.g., near-far, uphill-downhill, visible-out of sight (Diessel 1999)) are nonetheless categorized as having demonstrative status in virtue of this feature. Diessel (1999), citing Himmelmann (1997), discusses the case of German:

There are two expressions in colloquial German that one might consider demonstratives: *dies* and *das* [...] [They] do not contrast deictically: both forms may occur with proximal and distal meaning [...] Himmelmann argues that at least one of these forms, *dies*, functions as a demonstrative. He shows that *dies* serves the same pragmatic functions as demonstratives that are deictically contrastive. Like *this* and *that* in English, *dies* focuses

the hearer's attention on entities in the speech situation, often in combination with a pointing gesture. Since definite articles and third person pronouns do not function to orient the hearer in the surrounding situation, *dies* must be a demonstrative despite the fact that it does not encode a deictic contrast. Similar demonstratives seem to occur in other languages.

Diessel (1999: 38)

On this view, what qualifies *dies* as a demonstrative is the role it plays in conversation: namely, being a device for focusing an addressee's attention.²

The determination of the locating parameter of a given use of a demonstrative may be achieved by a number of means, from following physical gestures to attempting to access the speaker's intentions. In any event, the important point is that the successful use of a demonstrative requires successful coordination between speaker and addressee in resolving this feature—i.e., in determining the search space in which to find the index/referent.

A note on implementation

I should note briefly here that my implementation of the locating parameter differs from Wolter's (2006) on two counts. First, because the approach taken herein is indexical, on the present account it is the index rather than the interpretation *per se* that must be located in the relevant search space (though, as discussed above, the index and interpretation are frequently the same).

Second, for Wolter, the value of the situation parameter must be a “non-default situation,” roughly, a situation that the addressee is not already attending to by default. This makes intuitive sense—in keeping with the discussion above, it seems that the work of demonstratives is to direct an addressee's attention away from some situation to a different one. I hold, however, that no such stipulation is necessary. Rather, that the value of the

²Roberts (2002) seems to espouse an analogous, if differently conceived, view of what makes demonstratives demonstratives. On Roberts's (2002: 119) account, the felicitous use of a demonstrative presupposes a *demonstration* (physical or otherwise), where, “[d]emonstrations are communicative devices, used to bring an audience's attention to something.”

situation parameter is usually a non-default situation follows from pragmatic principles. The reasoning goes like this: to the extent that we can expect speakers to try not to make their addressees jump through unnecessary hoops to interpret their utterances (an expectation expressed, e.g., in Grice's maxim of Manner), we should likewise expect that, all other things being equal, a speaker will not require an addressee to work out the value of a contextual situation parameter only to end up back at the "default" situation. This view predicts that rather than having an undefined interpretation where the locating parameter maps to a default situation, the use of a such a demonstrative, in accordance with the VE Principle, is likely to invite an inference since it violates conversational expectations.

4.2.4 What separates *this* from *that*: Accessibility

There are two matters to discuss in this section. First, is the question of whether *that* is in fact marked for (lack of) proximity. Second, I will argue for a view of that which distinguishes *this* from *that* that departs from previous research. Specifically, I claim that the relevant notion is *accessibility* rather than proximity, and that this notion depends not only on the speaker's relation to the index/referent, but the addressee's as well.

***That*: marked for distality?**

On Elbourne's (2008) account of demonstratives, both *this* and *that* have a feature that presupposes that the index of the demonstrative is suitably proximal/distal relative to the speaker.³ Others, however, argue that *that* bears no such feature. Lyons (1977) and Wolter (2006), for example, argue for this view. Lyons (1977: 647) claims that, "there are many syntactic positions in which 'that' occurs in English and is neutral with respect to proximity or any other distinctions based on deixis." Wolter (2006) points out that English once had a three-member demonstrative system with *this* as the proximal member and *yon* as the distal

³Or, more precisely, speech act agent.

one, again perhaps suggesting *that* is neutral as regards distance. Levinson (2004: fn. 4), too, points out that “There is evidence suggesting a [. . .] privative relation between *this* and *that*, with the former marked as [+proximal] and the latter unmarked for proximity, picking up its distal meaning by the Quantity maxim.” In light of these considerations, I will adopt the view that any “distal” meaning for *that* is in fact not strictly entailed, but rather falls out from standing in a markedness relation with *this*, the latter of which does have an entailed, distance-related presupposition. Of course, in keeping with the DI Principle, the “distal” meaning of *that* will be readily available in many circumstances, given the deep semantic and distributional relatedness between *this* and *that*.

Demonstratives as sensitive to addressee(s)

I claim, however, that the choice between *this* and *that* depends not only on the speaker’s distance from the index, but the addressee’s, as well. This is a claim that, to my knowledge has not been directly stated in the literature on English demonstratives. To see the importance of the addressee’s relation to the index, consider the scenario in (3).

- (3) [A and B are shopping in a department store. A spies a beautiful handbag six feet away, while B is browsing in another part of the same department. A says to B]

Come over here! This handbag is gorgeous!

Now suppose that the situation is different, so that B, who has been getting ready for a party, finds A to ask for A’s assessment of B’s outfit. Standing six feet away from A, B, clutching a handbag, initiates the following dialog:

- (4) [B, holding a handbag and asking A’s opinion on B’s outfit, standing six feet away]

B: So what do you think? Do I look okay?

A: You look fantastic. And this handbag is gorgeous!

A’s use of *this* in (4) is not necessarily infelicitous, but I would wager that *this* is less likely as the demonstrative choice in (4) than in (3), despite the fact that the bag is equidistant from A in the two cases. Example (5) makes a similar point:

- (5) [A is going through a chest of toys, while B sits within arm's reach. A pulls out a large football and holds it up]
- a. **A:** Check out this thing! [A holds up football]
B: Holy crap! This is the biggest football I've ever seen.
- b. **A:** Check out this thing! [A hands the football to B]
B: Holy crap! This is the biggest football I've ever seen.

In (5a), B's use of *this*, though perhaps not altogether infelicitous, is not what we would expect in the main. The reason, I claim, is that while the football is relatively close and accessible to B, it is certainly closer and more accessible to A, who is holding the football. The use of *this* in (5b) is less interesting—in that example, the football is close to B in absolute terms and relative to its closeness to A.

Previous research has highlighted a similar dynamic with respect to cataphoric and anaphoric uses of demonstratives. Wolter (2006: 106), citing Fillmore's (1997) work on cataphoric demonstratives—exemplified in (6) and (7)—notes that “when a [cataphoric] demonstrative is uttered, the speaker knows what the referent is *but the hearer does not* [...] [Cataphoric] *this* can perhaps be seen as involving proximity to the speaker in virtue of the speaker controlling the introduction or identification of the referent” (emphasis added). Crucially, this analysis is stated in terms of not only the position of the speaker, but of the addressee, as well. In other words, “proximity to the speaker” is in fact a notion that involves proximity to the speaker *relative to proximity to the addressee*.

- (6) I bought this/*that book today. [speaker reveals a book]
(Wolter 2006 (102), judgment in original)
- (7) The observations suggest this/*that idea: that the climate is changing.
(Wolter 2006 (104), judgment in original)

Patterns in the anaphoric use of *this* also favor including addressees in calculating proximity. This time citing Gundel et al. (1993), Wolter (2006: 106) adopts the position that, “when *this* is anaphoric, the discourse referent associated with the demonstrative must have

been previously introduced by the speaker,” offering the following two contrasting examples:

(8) **A:** Have you seen the neighbor’s dog?

B: Yes, and ??this/that dog kept me awake all night.

(Wolter 2006 (106), judgment in original)

(9) The neighbors have a dog and this/that dog kept me awake all night.

(Wolter 2006 (107))

The reason B’s response sounds odd in the *this*-version of (8) is that it was A who introduced the dog in question into the discourse, giving A a degree of metaphorical closeness to the referent that B does not have. Again, we see that choice of demonstrative depends not only on the speaker’s absolute proximity to the index/referent, but also her proximity to the index/referent relative to the addressee’s proximity to the index/referent.

Pace Gundel et al. (1993) and Wolter (2006), a speaker can in fact use anaphoric *this* to refer to something introduced by her interlocutor. Consider the following exchange:

(10) **Doctor:** What brings you in here today?

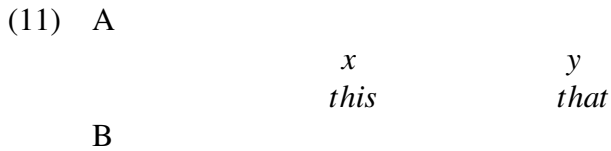
Patient: Well, I’ve been experiencing a lot of pain in my lower abdomen, and it seems to be getting worse.

Doctor: I see. And when did you first start feeling this pain?

In opting for *this*, the doctor acts as if she is at least as close to the pain in question as the patient is. Such a move may be interpreted as a comforting gesture of solidarity, or as being unwelcomely co-optive. Either way, both interpretations are tied to *this*’s presuppositions concerning the speaker’s proximity to the index/referent relative to the addressee’s proximity to it.

Of course, proximity is not determined entirely on such relative grounds, either. Part of the determination of proximity is not dependent upon the location of the addressee at all. For instance, imagine two individuals, A and B, standing side-by-side, both equidistant from a third entity, *x*, and both equidistant from a fourth entity, *y*, where *y* is twice as far

from A and B as x is, as in the diagram in (11). In such a scenario, it would not be surprising at all for A to talk to B about x and y as *this* and *that*, respectively, despite the fact that A and B are equidistant from both. Thus, for the purposes of selecting a demonstrative, it matters how far the speaker is from the index/referent relative to the addressee and in more absolute terms.



Accessibility rather than proximity

In the previous discussion, I have used the terms proximal and distal, close/near and far, as though distance—actual or metaphorical—were the appropriate notion for distinguishing between *that* and *that*. I would like to suggest, however, that *accessibility* provides a more appropriate concept for differentiating the two demonstratives.

I will not try to provide a precise definition of the notion of accessibility here; my primary objective instead is to point out that, even in the physical realm, distance is not everything when it comes to one's choice of demonstrative. Intuitively speaking, we can say of two objects that one is more accessible to an individual than the other if it can be obtained or reached or sensed or perceived by the individual more easily. With regard to the physical realm, how accessible an individual y is to an individual x depends in part on distance—all other things being equal, if y is closer to x than z is, it is likewise more accessible to x . But it also depends on other factors like the extent to which x is turned toward y , whether there are any barriers between x and y , and so on. For instance, it seems that, *ceteris paribus*, a speaker is more likely to use *this* to refer to a given referent y if it is x feet in front of her than if it is x feet behind her. Similarly, one is more likely to use *this* to refer to y if it is x feet away and in plain sight than if it is $x - \epsilon$ feet away but located in an opaque container. The following examples further illustrate that distance alone is not

enough to explain the difference between *this* and *that*:

(12) [A is driving his car with B in the passenger seat. The car in front of A is 25 feet ahead, moving too slowly by A's reckoning. There is another car directly to his right in the next lane, a few feet away.]

A: We're never gonna get there in time at 45 miles an hour.

B: Yeah, this traffic is nuts. We're pretty much hemmed in on all sides.

A: Well, I wouldn't have to worry about that guy next to me if this guy [gesturing forward] would just drive!

(13) [A and B are in an art gallery. A says to B:]

That painting is nice [halfheartedly gesturing to a painting four feet to her left], but this one here is absolutely breathtaking! [pointing to a painting directly in front of her, but twelve feet away]

In both examples, the relevant speaker uses both *this* and *that*, but uses the former to refer to the thing that is farther away in terms of Euclidean distance. Rather than being concerned with physical distance, the speaker opts for *this* to refer to the thing that is the focus of greater attention and is conceived of as being more directly at hand—that is, the thing more readily accessible in the broad sense described above.

Distinguishing *this* and *that*, in a nutshell

To summarize, what distinguishes *this* from *that* is simply that only the former includes the presupposition that the index x (typically the referent) is “suitably accessible” to the speaker a at the time and world of utterance, where: (i) an entity's accessibility to an individual is a measure of how easily that entity may be accessed—i.e., grasped, reached, sensed, perceived—by that individual; and (ii) whether x is suitably accessible to a depends not only on x 's accessibility to a in absolute terms but also on how accessible x is to the addressees of the utterance. In particular, an index is “suitably accessible” to the speaker if, and only if, it meets some contextually determined degree of accessibility to the speaker at the time and world of utterance (irrespective of the addressees), and is at least as accessible

to the speaker as to any of the addressees at that time and world.

4.2.5 The denotations of *this* and *that*

I can now present the full denotations of *this* and *that*. I begin by defining the predicate *in*, which will be our formal way of ensuring that the index of a demonstrative is in the contextually determined search space specified by the locating parameter.

(14) For all individuals x and situations s , $in(x, s)$ iff x is an individual in s .

Next, I operationalize the notion of suitable accessibility via the following two predicates:

(15) For all individuals x and y , worlds w , and times t , $access(x, y, w, t)$ is the accessibility of x to y at w and t .

(16) For all individuals x and y , sets of individuals B , degrees of accessibility d , worlds w and times t , $accessible(x, y, B, d, w, t) = 1$ iff:

$$access(x, y, w, t) \geq d \quad \& \quad \forall b \in B [access(x, y, w, t) \geq access(x, b, w, t)]$$

In prose, (16) says that $accessible(x, y, B, d, w, t)$ is true if and only if the level of accessibility of x to y at w and t is at least d , and that x is at least as accessible to y at w and t as it is to all of the members of B . This predicate figures into the denotation of *this* as in (18).

The denotations of *that* and *this*, then, are as follows:

(17) $\llbracket \text{that} \rrbracket = \lambda f_{\langle e, \text{st} \rangle} . \lambda s . \iota z \left(f(z)(s) \ \& \ g(x)(z)(s) \ \& \ atom(z)(s) \ \& \ in(x, s^*) \right)$

where x is the contextually determined index of the demonstrative, g (type $\langle e, \langle e, \text{st} \rangle \rangle$) is the contextually determined relation that is to hold between x and the ultimate interpretation, and s^* is the contextually determined search space.

(18) $\llbracket \text{this} \rrbracket = \lambda f_{\langle e, \text{st} \rangle} . \lambda s . \iota z \left(f(z)(s) \ \& \ g(x)(z)(s) \ \& \ atom(z)(s) \ \& \ in(x, s^*) \ \& \ accessible(x, a, B, d, w_0, t_0) \right)$

where x is the contextually determined index of the demonstrative, g (type $\langle e, \langle e, \text{st} \rangle \rangle$) is the contextually determined relation that is to hold between x and the ultimate interpretation, s^* is the contextually determined search space, a is the speaker of

the demonstrative, B the set of addressees, d the contextually determined degree of accessibility, and w_0 and t_0 the world and time of utterance.

These formulas may look especially complex, and we won't have to work with them directly going forward, but it is helpful to have all of the features of the denotation of demonstratives in one place. Note that, following Elbourne (2008), the f term in the two formulas corresponds to the property supplied by a sister NP in determiner uses of demonstratives, and the trivial property of being an individual in the case of pronominal uses. In prose, *that*, combined with the relevant property P , maps a given situation s to the maximum (unique) individual z in s such that: (i) z has the property P in s ; (ii) z stands in the contextually determined relation with the contextually determined index x of the demonstrative (usually the identity relation); (iii) z is an atom; and (iv) x is located in the contextually determined search space s^* ; modulo definedness. If no such individual exists in s , then the denotation of the demonstrative-DP is undefined for s . *This*, on the other hand, has an identical denotation, except that it adds the extra requirement that the index meets the contextually determined standard for accessibility to the speaker, and that that the index is at least as accessible to the speaker as to any of the addressees.

As a point of contrast, consider the denotation of *the*, repeated here as (19):

$$(19) \quad \llbracket \text{the} \rrbracket = \lambda f_{\langle e, st \rangle} . \lambda s . \lambda x . (f(x)(s))$$

The basic structure is the same, but here, the individual picked out by *the* need only be the maximum entity satisfying the property furnished by a sister NP. There is no requirement that the interpretation relate to a contextually determined index, no feature directing the addressees' attention to a particular search space, and certainly no requirement that such an index be suitably proximal to the speaker. Nor do any of the personal pronouns direct the addressees to a search space or place restrictions on the accessibility of their indexes. Indeed, these are the two features that separate demonstratives from all other determiners and pronouns in terms of entailed content.

Demonstratives as property-denoting?

As discussed in Section 2.2.10 with respect to first-person forms, there is reason to think that demonstratives and other indexicals basically denote properties, or functions from properties to properties. For instance, the basic denotation of *that* would be a function that takes a property argument (the trivial property of being an entity if *that* has no overt sister NP) and returns the property of: having that property, and standing in a particular, contextually determined relation to a particular, contextually determined index x such that x is located in some particular, contextually determined search space. This resulting property could serve as an argument to a *the*-like operator to yield the default, definite interpretation, but could also be the argument of other operators, like KIND, as well.

Indeed, it may be that indefinite *this* (Prince 1981) comes about via the application of a sort of existential operator to a more basic property of the kind discussed in the previous paragraph. One could argue then that the reason that *that* does not have indefinite interpretations is simply that it would be odd to use the form unmarked for accessibility to the speaker to introduce a new discourse referent, since presumably the discourse referent will always be at least as accessible to the person doing the introducing as to any addressee. I leave a deeper exploration of this possibility for future work.

4.2.6 Section summary, and some consequences

Whether or not demonstratives are basically definites, their crucial features are the same. Specifically, they include a locating parameter furnishing a search space in which to find the index/referent—typically distinct from the addressee’s “default” search space—and, in the case of *this*, they include an accessibility parameter, which means that they presuppose that the index/referent meets some contextual threshold for accessibility to the speaker, and is at least as accessible to the speaker as to any of the addressees.

In virtue of their locating parameter, both *this* and *that* serve as a means for singling out

a particular individual or distinguishing it from among others, by signaling the need for a shift from one's default search space to another. Moreover, as I will explain in greater detail later in the chapter, demonstratives, in virtue of their locating and accessibility parameters, are crucially bound up with the speaker's perspective. And, in order for their locating parameter to be resolved, both *this* and *that* require a special degree of coordination between speaker and addressee.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will discuss how these features of the content of demonstratives serve as the seed for the three social meanings of interest herein, working within the socio-pragmatic framework developed in Chapter 1.

4.3 Demonstratives and exclamation

4.3.1 The effect, and a partial explanation

Davis and Potts (2010) and Potts and Schwarz (2010) provide corpus evidence for Lakoff's (1974) suggestion that demonstratives can have exclamative effects. Focusing on English *this*, German *dies*, and Japanese *kore*, *kono*, and *konna*, the authors show that the use of these expressions in online reviews of books, hotels, and other products is especially highly associated with numerical ratings on the ends of a five-star rating scale, and less so with ratings in the middle of the scale. That is, if a reviewer incorporates these terms in her review of a product, she is more likely also to assign a one- or five-star numerical rating to the product, than, say a three-star rating. In contrast, use of *the* tends to have a stronger relative affinity for middle-range ratings. Figure 4.1 provides the distribution of ratings from reviews containing *the* and determiner *this*, controlling for the overall frequencies of the different ratings in Potts and Schwarz's (2010) data set. Values were calculated as follows. For each word of interest w and rating r , I divided the total number of tokens of w in reviews with a rating of r by the total number of tokens of all words in the corpus in

reviews with rating r . I then divided each of the resulting five values by the sum of those values. These are the values depicted in the figure. (The vertical lines running through the data points are error bars.) As the plots show, use of *this* in a user product review tends to correspond with ratings at the extremes of the rating scale, and vice versa for *the*.

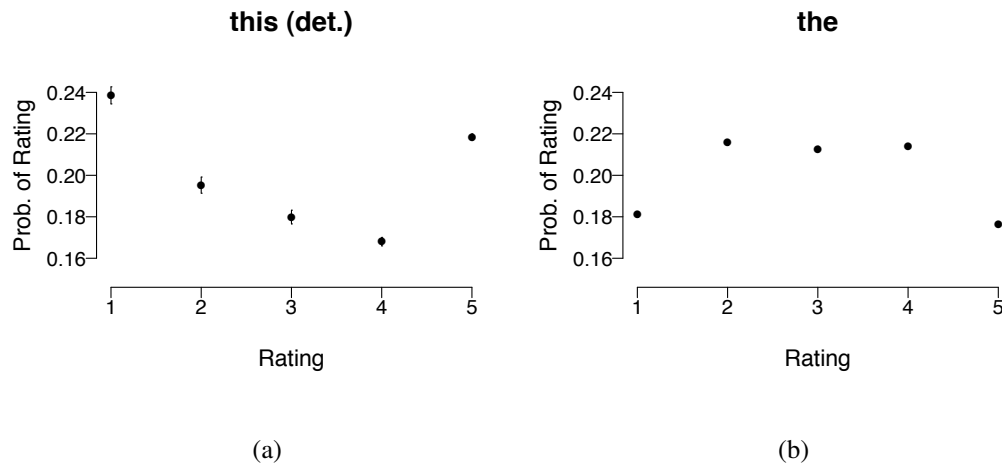


Figure 4.1: The (anti-)exclamativity of *this* and *the* in user product reviews. (Based on data from Potts and Schwarz 2010.)

A partial explanation

To help explain this pattern, Davis and Potts (2010) appeal to Horn’s (1984) notion of the *division of pragmatic labor* (DPL; discussed in Chapter 1), of which the VE Principle presented in this work is a close relative. In essence, the DPL, like the more general VE Principle, suggests that marked forms tend to receive marked interpretations.

As Davis and Potts (2010) note, this perspective has been applied profitably to a number of linguistic phenomena, revolving mostly around the enrichment of an utterance’s descriptive content. Davis and Potts’ (2010) major theoretical innovation was to apply this same perspective to the affective or expressive domain of meaning.

Their account goes like this. As argued in Elbourne (2008) (and herein), *this* is “strictly

more complex morphosemantically than *the*” (Davis and Potts 2010: 38). Moreover *this* is considerably less frequent than *the*. These facts combine to make *this* the marked member in the pair of the two expressions that, as the authors note, are related in denotational meaning and compete for the same syntactic slot. They reason, then, that it is to be expected that between the two expressions, it is *this* that has an extra, expressive meaning, while *the* is more neutral in that regard.

The application of Horn’s (1984) principle to affective, social, and/or expressive content is an important contribution to understanding this domain of meaning. This appeal to Horn (1984), however does not tell a complete story. The question remains: why is the marked meaning one of exclamation and not something else—for instance, apathy? To illustrate the problem from another perspective, suppose there were a determiner *threen* that had the same semantics as *the* but with the additional requirement that the referent of the relevant DP be green, so that *threen ball*, for instance, picks out the unique green ball in a given situation. This would make *threen* marked relative to *the*, perhaps giving rise to socio-expressive effects. But would we expect the socio-expressive character of *threen* to be the same as that of demonstratives?

In the next section, I will account for the exclamation of demonstratives. The account draws crucially on the FS Principle, which, again, states in part that the full significance of a given expression depends upon what distinguishes that expression from other functionally related expressions; and on the VE Principle, whereby utterances violating conversational expectations tend to be assigned special significance.

4.3.2 The root of the exclamation effect

Demonstratives as tools for distinguishing and singling out

Diessel (2012: 11), citing his own prior work (Diessel 2006) and that of Levinson (2004),

sets out two principal functions for demonstratives: “[i] creat[ing] a new focus of attention or else [(ii)] indicat[ing] a contrast between two previously established referents.” Diessel’s appraisal squares with Wolter’s (2006) account of demonstratives (a variation of which is adopted herein), whereby demonstratives are tools for picking out individuals in a contextually determined, non-default search space. The first class of uses laid out by Diessel consists of cases in which a speaker uses a demonstrative to “create a new focus of attention,” as in (20).

- (20) [Speaker spies a bird that he does not believe is part of his and his addressee’s common ground. Pointing, he says]

That bird is beautiful!

On the present account of demonstratives, *that* is a fitting choice for helping the addressee pick out the intended referent: the use of a demonstrative, in essence, instructs the addressee to direct her attention away from the situation she is looking to or would look to by default (typically the discourse context) to some other situation (likely a subsituation of the current one)—the “new focus of attention”—to find the individual being talked about.

The other chief, sometimes overlapping, set of circumstances that call for a demonstrative are cases in which the speaker wishes to “indicate a contrast between two previously established referents.” This function is achieved by the same general means under the present theory of demonstratives: the demonstrative effectively tells the speaker to “zoom in” (Wolter 2006) on some proper subpart of the default situation to find the intended referent, as in (21), from Wolter (2006) (based on Roberts 2002 (41))

- (21) A woman_i entered from stage left. Another woman_j entered from stage right.
That/This woman_j was carrying a basket of flowers. (Wolter 2006 ch. 3, (36a))

In this case, the demonstrative serves to direct the addressee not to a situation separate from the default situation (e.g., the full discourse context) but to a situation smaller than the default situation—in this case, one involving the latter but not the former woman, to find the intended referent.

Roberts (2002), in discussing cases in which demonstratives are used where a definite description or pronoun might have been used instead, offers a similar assessment of the distribution of demonstratives:

[In such contexts, demonstratives] seem to be used for one of two reasons: They tend to carry an implication of *contrast*, implicating that other members of a relevant contrast set do not have the properties predicated of the demonstrative [...] And [...] they tend to be used when the discourse referent which satisfies their familiarity is only weakly familiar [...] especially if it *contrasts* in this respect with other, strongly familiar discourse referents which are alternative candidates to satisfy that familiarity presupposition.

Roberts (2002: 124–125) (emphasis added)

Roberts's (2002) take is again consistent with the present theory of demonstratives. Demonstratives direct the addressee to search in a (typically) non-default space, setting up a contrast: don't look where you'd look by default, look *here/there*.

So the present theory of demonstratives explains why they are useful relative to the two cases laid out by Diessel. In the case of introducing something new to the discourse, they are valuable relative to other expressions because they effectively come with an instruction to the addressee to look for the intended referent in some space other than her default focus of attention prior to the utterance of the demonstrative. They are likewise useful for setting up a contrast: by directing the addressee to search in a non-default space, they allow the speaker to refer to something via descriptive content that may well apply to more than one individual in the default situation. Other expressions don't work well in this regard, because they don't have the extra search-domain restrictor that demonstratives have in virtue of their locating parameter. Thus *the book*, for instance, is generally only felicitous where there is one book in the default situation, whereas with *that book* there may be many, and the locating parameter of the demonstrative instructs the addressee to shift to a non-default search space.

In both cases, the demonstrative calls on the addressee to redirect or narrow her focus

order to single out a particular individual is called for. But, to feed a carrot to an already satiated horse (and to avoid another, macabre equine metaphor), there is more to use and meaning than descriptive content. Thus, a demonstrative where a simpler or otherwise more expected expression would do just as well descriptively may yet be felicitous—indeed, in a sense, preferred—if there is social or expressive work to be done.

This reasoning is akin to Davis and Potts' (2010) appeal to Horn's (1984) division of pragmatic labor. Use of a "marked" form leads to a "marked" interpretation. But still, why do demonstratives get the socio-expressive interpretations that they do? Why do they express what they express and not, say sadness or mistrust or anxiety or ambivalence?

4.3.3 From contrasting and deliberately singling out to exclamation

We have established that, in virtue of their locating parameter, demonstratives are useful tools for deliberately singling something out and making salient a contrast between that thing and other potential referents. As devices for such purposes, demonstratives have a deliberate, emphatic force. The definition of *emphatic* in the *New Oxford American Dictionary* captures well what I mean by emphatic: "expressing something forcibly and clearly."⁴ Having an inherently emphatic oomph, a quality absent other determiners and pronouns, demonstratives present themselves as an ideal choice for making emphatic, i.e., exclamative, statements.

In keeping with the VE Principle, demonstratives are especially likely to have emphatic, exclamative force where their use violates conversational expectations. To the extent that conversational expectations include pressure not to use expressions that are unduly complex for conveying descriptive content, we see demonstratives' exclamative force especially clearly where their locating parameter is unnecessary for the purposes of securing

⁴"emphatic." 2014. *Oxford Dictionaries Online*. Oxford University Press. URL http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/american_english/emphatic?q=emphatic.

reference—that is, when some other, less complex and demanding expression not associated with contrasts and shifts in attention is sufficient for picking out what’s being talked about. A classic case is the use of a demonstrative with a proper name, as in (23), from Lakoff (1974):

(23) This Henry Kissinger is really something! (Lakoff 1974: 347)

As many have pointed out (Wolter 2006; Potts and Schwarz 2010; Riddle 2010; Acton and Potts 2014; *inter alia*), this example is remarkable because a full proper name is generally sufficient on its own for picking out a particular individual. The demonstrative in (23) is only referentially useful in the indubitably rare case of distinguishing between Henry Kissingers. But the demonstrative can have expressive purposes, among them adding to the exclamativity of the utterance. The speaker employs a form that involves redirecting attention and deliberately singling something out. Such individuation, however, is unnecessary, redundant for referential purposes. In accordance with the VE Principle, such usage is likely to be assigned special significance, and in accordance with the FS Principle, this significance is tied to what sets the demonstrative phrase apart from alternatives, which includes its emphatic force. The full demonstrative phrase picks out Kissinger emphatically, perhaps akin to saying something like “Henry Kissinger, yes, Henry Kissinger . . .”

In brief, demonstratives, in virtue of their locating parameter, are generally used for deliberately picking something out, giving them an emphatic, exclamative force. As with the other social meanings discussed in this work, this force is foregrounded especially when a demonstrative is used where some other, less complex expression that better conforms to conversational expectations might have been used instead. In such circumstances the demonstrative is redundant as regards descriptive content, calling for a shift in the addressee’s focus of attention where no such shift is needed.

The exclamativity of demonstratives shows up in other languages as well, providing further evidence that it is not merely an accidental convention. Davis and Potts (2010) and Potts and Schwarz (2010), for instance, provide quantitative evidence of the exclamativity

of demonstratives in not only English but in German and Japanese. Moreover, Wu (2008) claims that Chinese demonstratives can express emphasis as well. Writing, for instance, on the use of *na* ‘that’ in topic position, in cases where its presence is optional, Wu (2008) offers an account in line with the analysis developed herein.

(24) Co-text: “Why take it so seriously? My! They’re all plants, anyway.”

buguo shangmian lia zir shaowei hunleyihun na you shenme
 only on (the label) two word slightly mixed that have what
guanxi ne?
 significance QS

Translated text: ‘What does it matter if they’re a little mixed up?
 (QS: question particle)

(Wu 2008 (3))

With regard to the example in (24), Wu explains:

In [(24)], *na* ‘that’ is structurally optional [...] Pragmatically, the use of *na* ‘that’ has an effect of adding strength to the speaker’s attitudinal stance. In this case, that of trivializing the fact that he confused the plant names and caused trouble for the addressee. Prosodically, given stress, as it would normally be given, *na* ‘that’ reinforces the propositional attitude expressed in the rhetorical question.

Wu (2008: 133)

Redundancy and exclamation more generally

Stating something in a manner that is in some sense redundant to add emphasis is a practice that pervades language use. We see this clearly in reduplication, for instance, but there are many other such features of language.⁵ Consider *intensive reflexivization* (Edmondson and Plank 1978), found in English and in many other languages. The following exchange from the 1963 motion picture *Bye Bye Birdie* (reflective of the politics of the times) illustrates.

⁵Potts (2011), for instance, discusses the repeated use of negation to intensify the negative force of an utterance. See also Israel’s (2001) work on emphatic negative polarity items.

- (25) [A conversation between songwriter Albert Peterson and a conductor for the Moscow Ballet. Peterson was to have his song performed on the *Ed Sullivan Show*, but it appears that the length of a performance by the Ballet, scheduled for the same night, will crowd Peterson's song out of the program.]

Peterson: Will you cut three minutes? – Two minutes? – A minute and a half?

Conductor: To cut even ten seconds would be artistic sabotage. This ballet has historic significance. It was performed the same day as the funeral of the Tsar. Lenin *himself* made the arrangement!

Peterson: Lenin arranged music?

Conductor: No. Funerals!⁶

The presence of *himself* in the conductor's initial response does not add anything to the descriptive content *Lenin*—we still end up with Lenin—but it does add emphasis to the reference and clearly contributes to the exclamation of the utterance. (It is perhaps no accident that the conductor refers to the ballet as *this ballet* rather than *the ballet* in the same utterance.) The contrastive force of such uses in English further is evidenced by their frequent co-occurrence with the phrase *none other than*. Eckardt (2001) and Sæbø (2009), writing on related phenomena in German (*selbst*) and Norwegian (*seg selv*), respectively, point out the focus and contrastive force associated with these uses. Thus, in intensive reflexives we have another example of expressions that are associated with both deliberately singling things out and expressing emphasis. Being more complex than necessary for referential purposes, such forms are assigned special significance (VE Principle), and what separates them from less marked variants is their redundancy, suggesting that the speaker means to be unmistakably clear about what she is saying.

Certain adverbs and other expressions revolving around truth seem to function in a related way, as in (26).

- (26) a. *Very truly* I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.⁷

⁶*Bye Bye Birdie*. 1963. Columbia Pictures.

⁷*Holy Bible*, book of John, 12:24.

- b. The endless fields of tulips were *truly* a sight to behold, even on a grey, drizzly day.⁸

Taken literally, expressions like *truly* simply assert the truth of something, which, under the assumption that one's conversational partner generally speaks truthfully, is a redundant act. However, in presumably unnecessarily asserting truth, they present a marked insistence on the verity and significance of the content they apply to, thereby providing emphatic force—in much the same way that a demonstrative, where referentially unnecessary, adds emphasis to the referential act. The connection between explicitly asserting truth and speaking emphatically is so strong that it's easy to lose sight of the truth-assertoric origin of many of our quotidian intensifying adverbs, like *very* and *really* (Peters 1994; Tagliamonte 2008). Related are the descriptively uninformative yet nonetheless emphatic speech-act phrases like “I'm telling you”:

- (27) a. [Of a home sound system] I'm telling you, you can adjust volume bedroom, living room, patio [sic]. It's insane. It's the best thing ever.⁹
- b. I was good at jump training. But I could never get past twenty minutes of the sixty-minute yoga session. I'm telling you, the warrior pose undid me.¹⁰

Another phenomenon, more closely related to demonstratives, is the affective use of other deictic terms, like the adverbs *here* and *now*. Example (28) illustrates. The indignant tone of the father's response would hold without the presence of *here* and *now*, both of which go without saying as far as descriptive content (where and when else would the addressee be being told to listen?), but their presence adds emphasis, as if to say, “Make no mistake about it: you are to listen to what I'm saying here and now, so pay attention!”

⁸Jenkins, Keith. “Tulips in Holland – oh what a sight!” Last accessed 30 May 2014. <http://velvetescape.com/2014/04/tulips-in-holland/>.

⁹*The Today Show*. 21 May 2012. From COCA (Davies, 2008-).

¹⁰Chiarella, Tom. “Something called P90X.” *Esquire*. April 2011. From COCA (Davies, 2008-).

- (28) [Daughter to her parents:] “You all are both smoking too much, and you’ll make yourselves sick.” Mama gasped and started to cry. Daddy walked around the fancy front grillework of the Cadillac. “Now listen here, Miss,” he said, “you don’t talk to your mother that way, in case you’ve forgotten.”¹¹

The common thread in all of these examples is the presence of an expression that is descriptively redundant but has a reinforcing, emphatic quality. The expressions effectively say, “Yes, I mean this referent/proposition/imperative in particular.” They single something out as particularly remarkable and assign it special prominence. We see a similar effect with other components of interactional exchange as well, from phonological stress, which can have a contrastive or intensifying force, to gestures, which can be employed to the same ends (see, e.g., Løevenbruck et al. 2009). More generally, I would wager that linguistic and paralinguistic tools for highlighting particular things or setting them apart, particularly where such tools are unnecessary for the successful communication of descriptive content, are likely to also have a degree of emphatic, exclamative force.¹²

4.3.4 Interim summary

To summarize briefly, demonstratives, in virtue of their locating parameters, are particularly well suited among determiners and pronouns for deliberately highlighting and setting something apart. This lends an emphatic force to their use. Thus, between a demonstrative and some other pronoun or determiner not bearing this force, the demonstrative is the clear choice as far as emphasis and exclamativity are concerned (all other things being equal). This is particularly so in cases in which the use of a demonstrative is not especially helpful

¹¹Smith, Lee. 1997. “Live Bottomless.” *Southern Review*. Autumn 1997, Vol. 33 Issue 4, p.732. From COCA (Davies, 2008-).

¹²A clear candidate, for instance, is syntactic topicalization—a tool which, like demonstratives and intensive reflexives, is bound up with contrast and focus. Løevenbruck et al. (2009: 6) point out the interrelatedness of these and other previously discussed tools for highlighting something or setting it apart: “In a broad sense, deixis is a referential operation, i.e., it provides a mean [sic] to highlight relevant elements in the discourse, to designate, identify or even select an element. It is therefore tightly linked with topicalization, focus and extraction (see, e.g., Berthoud 1992; Jackendoff 2002).” I leave an examination of the emphatic force (or lack thereof) of topicalization for future research.

or necessary for the purposes of securing reference and therefore runs up against conversational expectations (VE Principle)—in such cases, their descriptive superfluity foregrounds their emphatic function relative to related expressions (FS Principle).

4.3.5 A puzzle: Extra exclamation for proximal demonstratives

We have an explanation for the exclamation of demonstratives, but a puzzle remains. In particular, Potts and Schwarz (2010) find that while the use of *this* in product reviews tends to pattern with product ratings at the low and high ends of the scale relative to other expressions, *that* shows an opposite pattern. The difference is exhibited in Figure 4.2. The plot for *the* is also provided as a point of comparison. From these plots it seems that whereas *this* exhibits exclamative force in product reviews, *that* does not, patterning more like *the* (but with a negative skew).

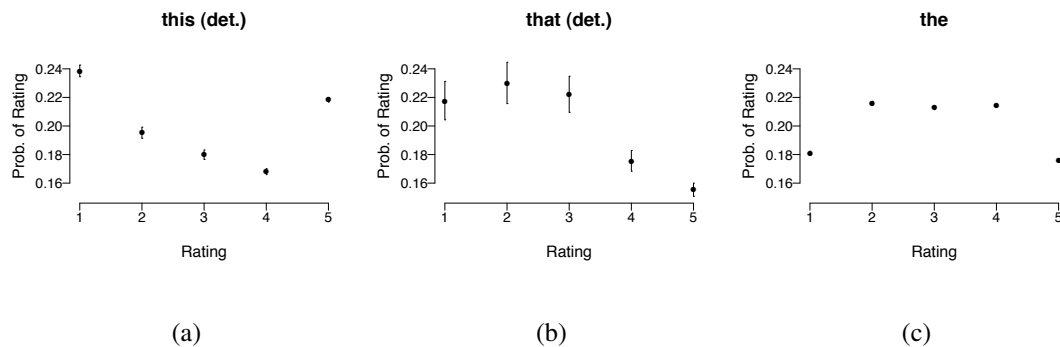


Figure 4.2: Comparing the exclamativity of *this*, *that*, and *the* in user product reviews. (Based on the data from Potts and Schwarz 2010.)

Demonstratives in product reviews

One potential, partial explanation for the pattern is that, as Potts and Schwarz (2010) note, the part-of-speech tagger they used to identify tokens of demonstrative *that* had a relatively high error rate. In an analysis of 150 tokens of *that* selected at random, they found that

true demonstrative tokens in the sample were correctly identified as such only 44% of the time. If complementizer and relativizer uses of *that* aren't associated with exclamation, then the part-of-speech tagging errors could make the exclamation of demonstrative *that* in the corpus look artificially low.

But there is another factor at work here. Given that product reviews are monologic in the vast majority of cases and that the product itself is the primary topic of such reviews, we should expect that *this* is far more likely than *that* to be used in referring to the product. Whereas *this*, with its accessibility feature, presupposes that the individual being picked out is accessible to the speaker irrespective of any addressees and at least as accessible to the speaker as it is to any addressee, *that* has no such presupposition. In turn, *this* is the clear choice for referring to something that one has introduced herself and is the continual topic of a monologue. Imagine a movie review beginning, "That movie/film . . .," or ending with "Overall, that movie/film . . ." Such usage is not entirely ruled out, but is no doubt marked.

Indeed, *this* is in fact employed more frequently than *that* in referring to a product under consideration in a monologic review. For instance, in the top ten International Movie Database (IMDB) user reviews of the polarizing movie *Titanic* as of May 31, 2014, 56 (75.7%) of the 74 tokens of *this* were used to refer to the movie itself, compared with one (4.0%) of the 25 tokens of demonstrative *that*. The one token of *that* referring to the movie comes in a narrative sequence in which the speaker arguably takes the perspective of someone else:

- (29) Every once in a while the conversation will turn to "favorite movies." I'll mention *Titanic*, and at least a couple people will snicker. I pay them no mind because I know that five years ago, these same people were moved to tears by *that very movie*. And they're too embarrassed now to admit it.¹³

All of this suggests that, in stark contrast to the case of *that*, a great proportion of

¹³From a review of *Titanic* on IMDB. Last accessed 31 May 2014. http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0120338/reviews?ref_=tt_urv.

tokens of *this* in user reviews are dedicated to talking about the thing under review itself. And because of the genre, the topic of the reviews is generally readily apparent, making *this* less crucial for descriptive purposes than in many other scenarios. In turn, then, *this* is frequently being used in making emphatic statements about the product being reviewed. Thus we see a relatively strong relationship between the use of *this* and ratings at one or the other end of the rating scale. *That*, on the other hand, which is rarely employed in identifying the product *per se*, is far less likely to be involved in emphatic statements about the product, giving fewer occasions for contributing an exclamative effect.

Accessibility and exclamativity

While I contend that the extra exclamativity of *this* over *that* observed by Davis and Potts (2010) and Potts and Schwarz (2010) is largely due to the genre of speech they analyzed, there is also reason to believe that *this* has a closer association with exclamativity more generally. Consider the minimally contrastive utterances in (30).

- (30) [Speaker has just come in from outside]
- a. Boy, is the weather ever nasty!
 - b. Boy, is *this* weather ever nasty!
 - c. Boy, is *that* weather ever nasty!

All three utterances are patently exclamative, but, to my ear at least, the latter two have a more exclamative feel than (30a). The difference of interest here is between (30b) and (30c). Between the two, with (30b) one gets the sense that the speaker is experiencing the weather in question more presently and more acutely, almost as if she is still caught outside in the elements. There is no big surprise here, given that, unlike *that*, *this* presupposes that that relevant individual is in a search space that is close and accessible to the speaker: *this weather*, especially given the availability of *that weather*, suggests that the weather in question is really bearing down on the speaker. The same dynamic holds between the

examples in (31).

(31) [Speaker is on a diet to lose weight. Sitting down to eat, the speaker says]

- a. This Atkins diet is killing me! A life without carbs is no life at all!
- b. That Atkins diet is killing me! A life without carbs is no life at all!

Again, the *this*-version of the utterance suggests especially strongly that the referent is impinging on the speaker. In fact, I submit that a hearer of the *that*-version, sooner than a hearer of the *this*-version, may wonder whether the speaker is partaking of the diet himself, or perhaps simply irritated with it in principle. (For instance, it seems that “Will people never learn?”, follows (31b) more smoothly than it does (31a).)

So, relative to *that*, *this*, in virtue of its accessibility feature, suggests that the individual of interest is very much in the speaker’s space. Now it may well be that we are more likely to have (and express) a strong opinion about or reaction to things physically, temporally, or psychologically close to us than to things at a distance. For things in our space tend to have a greater relevance to and impact on our lives. To the extent that this is true, it is to be expected on the basis of the content of *this*, with its accessibility feature, that it would have a closer association with exclamation than *that*. I leave further investigation along these lines for future work.

The exclamation of *that*

In the preceding discussion I established a reason why, between *this* and *that*, *this* may generally be the more exclamative of the two. More empirical work is needed to establish that *this* is indeed generally more exclamative, and to verify my provisional account why this may be so. In any case, let there be no doubt that *that*, too, can have exclamative force. The contrast between (30a) and (30c) provides one example. Instances of exclamative *that* can also be found in multiple, successive uses of pronominal *that* in referring to an event or proposition. (32) provides some examples, the first two from fiction and the second two

from the 2008 U.S. vice presidential debate. In each example, the speaker evinces a tone of insistence and exclamation, aided in part by the emphatic uses of *that*.

- (32) a. You don't give a \$500 tip to the housekeeper! That's inappropriate! That's inexcusable! That, I don't forgive!¹⁴
- b. [Abe Simpson, recalling trying times in the Simpson family]
Abe: They even brought their lawyers to Thanksgiving dinner!
 [Cut to the Simpson family at Thanksgiving dinner, with lawyers]
Homer Simpson: So, uh, how's everybody doing?
Lawyer 1: You don't have to answer that.
Lisa Simpson: Shut up, all of you! Or I'll sue!
Marge Simpson: Oh, save it for your next book you little snitch!
Lawyer 2: That's assault! That is assault!¹⁵
- c. **Joe Biden:** I promise you, if an attack comes in the homeland, it's going to come as our security services have said, it is going to come from al Qaeda planning in the hills of Afghanistan and Pakistan. That's where they live. That's where they are. That's where it will come from.
- d. **Sarah Palin:** He's proposing a \$5,000 tax credit for families so that they can get out there and they can purchase their own health care coverage. That's a smart thing to do. That's budget neutral. That doesn't cost the government anything as opposed to Barack Obama's plan [...]

For another example, consider the difference between *I love the guy* and *I love that guy*, the latter of which, to my ears is, the more emphatic of the two (*ceteris paribus*). Usage data support this intuition. Of the 11 tokens of the latter in COCA (Davies 2008-), only one (9.1%) included a contrastive statement or qualifier. In contrast, seven of the 26 tokens (26.9%) of the former do, as in (33).

¹⁴*Bottle Rocket*. 1996. Columbia Pictures.

¹⁵"Behind the Laughter." *The Simpsons*. First aired 21 May 2000.

- (33) a. Sorry, baby, I love the guy, but that swift he's not.¹⁶
- b. I love the guy's music, but only a fanatic could appreciate the two volumes of annotations, more than 50 previously unreleased cuts, the 1949 radio transcriptions of his "Health and Happiness" shows (including Hank's pitches for the patent medicine Hadacol), demo tapes and studio out-takes.¹⁷
- c. I mean, I love the guy ... he's a really sweet kid, a sensitive kid, he really is, even though he comes across as tough sometimes ... but, you know, there are constantly these things going on with him.¹⁸

It is beyond the scope of this work to provide a thorough accounting of the exclamativity of *that*. For now, I simply claim that *that* clearly can have exclamative force, and suggest that it will be important to consider dialogues—where topic- and speaker-shifts are more frequent than in monologues—in future research on the matter.

4.3.6 Section summary

Summarizing in brief, demonstratives have exclamative force in virtue of their locating parameters, which make them useful tools for deliberately singling something out. Relative to other DPs, then, demonstrative-DPs, where possible, are the clear choice for expressing exclamativity, all other things being equal. Use of a demonstrative where another expression better conforms with conversational expectations only serves to strengthen this effect (VE Principle). As for differences between the exclamativity of *this* and *that*, it seems that a large share of differences observed to date are due to genre-specific effects—in particular, that monologic product reviews favor *this* over *that* for referring to the product. Further research is needed to determine the extent to which *this*, perhaps in virtue of its accessibility feature, is indeed generally more exclamative than *that*.

¹⁶Mattison, Alice. 2001. "In case we're separated." *Ploughshares*. 27:102–114. From COCA (Davies, 2008-).

¹⁷Brady, Liz. 2000. "Bad date: a Jane Yeats mystery." *Canadian Woman Studies*. 20:1–10. From COCA (Davies, 2008-).

¹⁸Geffner, Michael P. 1996. "A fish out of water." *Sporting News*. 220.7–12. From COCA (Davies, 2008-).

4.4 Demonstratives and evaluativity

I begin with the observation that although exclamation and evaluativity are intertwined, they are importantly different. One can, of course, offer a lukewarm evaluation of something, for instance. The purpose of this section is to examine the evaluative force of demonstratives.

The picture, in brief, is as follows: the use and interpretation of demonstratives depends upon the speaker and her orientation toward and perspective on a particular entity, making them deeply subjective expressions. Given the general link between subjectivity and evaluativity, demonstratives are in turn useful tools for evaluative statements and stance-taking.

4.4.1 Previous work on demonstratives as subjective or evaluative

Lakoff (1974)

Research on the socio-expressive dimension of demonstratives owes much to the work of Lakoff (1974), who noted that demonstratives, in addition to being used for *spatio-temporal deixis* (picking out things in time and space) and *discourse deixis* (i.e., anaphora and cataphora), can be used for what she calls *emotional deixis*. She uses this term as a sort of “elsewhere” category, meant to capture uses that aren’t easily categorized as instances of spatio-temporal or discourse deixis: “there is a third way in which demonstratives, and many other types of words whose principal sphere of usability involves spatio-temporal location, are used, in which the metaphor, if any, is harder to pin down: we can’t quite figure out the relationship between the concepts. This is the sphere that we might characterize as emotional deixis” (Lakoff 1974: 346). Lakoff doesn’t offer a more affirmative definition of emotional deixis, but all of the instances she cites crucially involve someone expressing or connoting something more than just descriptive content. She connects many of the uses to “achieving camaraderie” or solidarity, the subject of the next section, but she also notes that many instances of emotionally deictic demonstratives involve expressing an emotion

or evaluation, citing examples like (34) (see also (23), above).

(34) That Henry Kissinger sure knows his way around Hollywood! (Lakoff 1974 (45))
According to Lakoff (1974: 352), the demonstrative in (34) “appears to establish emotional solidarity between the [speaker and addressee] by implying that both participants in the conversation share *the same views toward the subject of discussion*” (emphasis added). Whether or not the view in question is indeed shared, it is clear that the speaker is expressing an evaluative view. Lakoff adds that, “If what is being attributed to Kissinger is emotionally colorless, *that* cannot be used in this sense,” citing (35):

(35) *That Henry Kissinger is 5’8” tall. (Lakoff 1974 (46), judgment in original)

Lakoff goes on to say that (35) is in fact felicitous, insofar as “[Kissinger’s] being 5’8” tall is for some reason or other remarkable, admirable, or dreadful.” Indeed, switching the full stop to an exclamation point in (35) seems to render the utterance perfectly acceptable, if it is not perfectly acceptable as it is. In any case, the important point here is the observation that demonstratives like those in (34) and (35) seem to be associated with expressing some subjective attitude or evaluation.

Bowdle and Ward (1995)

In their work on demonstratives used as generics, Bowdle and Ward (1995) claim that such uses must involve evaluative predication, offering the following:

(36) **A:** My cousin just returned from Canada with an adorable Labrador retriever puppy.

B₁: Those Labradors are extremely loyal, you know.

B₂: #Those Labradors were first bred in Newfoundland, you know.

B₃: Labradors were first bred in Newfoundland, you know.

(Bowdle and Ward 1995 (7), judgment in original)

According to Bowdle and Ward, B₁’s utterance “with the evaluative predicate” is felicitous, while B₂’s “with the more factual predicate” is not. The latter claim assumes a sort of default context. Indeed, B₂’s response would be perfectly felicitous if, for instance, B₂

were a Newfoundlander for whom the origin of Labradors was a point of pride. Consider also:

(37) I heard those Teslas run about a hundred grand.

Here there is no evaluative predicate, either. It does seem, though, that the utterance, with its incorporation of *those*, is likely to convey not only the proposition that Teslas cost roughly \$100,000, but also some attitude toward that proposition—for example, that \$100,000 is a lot of money for a car, or not a lot of money for such a fine car, etc. So generic demonstratives do not require an inherently evaluative predicate (*pace* Bowdle and Ward 1995), nor must the evaluativity pertain to the kind *per se*, though it can.¹⁹ Indeed, certain uses of demonstratives in other languages can express propositional attitudes, as well. We saw this already in the case of syntactically optional *na* ‘that’ in Chinese (Wu 2008). Naruoka (2003) highlights a similar case in Japanese, observing of the use of the *-nna* series of demonstratives that: “most of the usage overtly expresses the following speaker’s modality: 1) negative emotion or rejection, and 2) surprise. These emotions and attitudes are toward the object, the interlocutor, or the whole utterance or action that includes the object.” In any case, while Bowdle and Ward’s (1995) assessment of the expressive character of English generic demonstratives was too narrow, they were surely correct in attributing to these expressions an association with evaluativity.

Wolter (2006)

Wolter (2006), too, writes about demonstratives with socio-expressive force, calling them *emotive demonstratives*. She notes that such uses appear to pose a problem for her general account because they are permissible even where the semantic content of their sister NP

¹⁹Potts and Schwarz (2010) also point out cases in which demonstratives contribute to the evaluativity of an utterance, even if there is no evaluative predicate *per se* as in (i):

(i) And who is this John Perkins, who claims that he could confound the best economists of the World Bank and other aid institutions? (Potts and Schwarz 2010 (8d))

is enough to pick out the referent uniquely, as in (34) (again, assuming we are not dealing with a multitude of Henry Kissingers.) For on Wolter's (2006) account, demonstratives are simply uncalled for where there is no need to appeal to a non-default situation, and semantic uniqueness renders such appeals unnecessary. Wolter (2006) claims, however, that this is not a real problem. Instead, she claims that "emotive demonstrative[s] [...] indicate that (the speaker assumes that) the discourse participants share some knowledge or emotion about the referent of the demonstrative" and that such demonstratives are indeed relativized to a non-default situation—specifically, the situation consisting of "the discourse participants, the referent of the demonstrative, and the state of experiencing the knowledge or emotion that the discourse participants share" (Wolter 2006: 84).

I think this account is on the right track, but it has a few problems. For one, as we saw above, in some cases the relevant emotion is not one toward the referent *per se* but rather toward some proposition including that individual. More fundamentally, the account casts the evaluative force of demonstratives as a largely arbitrary convention, as noted by Potts and Schwarz (2010). For Wolter:

There is no guarantee that every language will have emotive demonstratives—we shouldn't take it for granted that every language will have a convention associating a situation of shared knowledge or emotion and a particular determiner.

Wolter (2006: 85)

Wolter does go on to say that if any determiner in a given language is to have this role, it ought to be a demonstrative. But her reason is simply that demonstratives are "marked definite determiners": "However, if a language *does* have emotive DPs of this sort, it is expected that a marked definite determiner—i.e., a demonstrative—will be used to express the emotive meaning" (Wolter 2006: 85).

While I agree that we cannot assume that "every language will have a convention associating a situation of shared knowledge or emotion and a particular determiner," I must also

agree with Potts and Schwarz (2010) that Wolter's (2006) assessment—despite including the prediction that demonstratives are likely candidates for doing socio-expressive work—obfuscates the latent bias in demonstratives toward particular social meanings. It is true that not all languages allow for all the same uses of demonstratives toward all the same ends. Nonetheless, it seems that having some association between demonstratives and evaluativity is by no means an anomaly of English. So, for instance, while Korean does not permit demonstratives to serve as the determiners of proper names to the same effect as English demonstratives in examples like (34), it has other affective uses, such as the use of distal *jeo* to refer to and thereby alienate a third party (Kyuwon Moon, p.c.). As I will argue in more detail shortly, I maintain that demonstratives are inherently subjective, and therefore readily offer themselves as devices for stance-taking and issuing evaluations.

Davis and Potts (2010) and Potts and Schwarz (2010)

Davis and Potts (2010) and Potts and Schwarz (2010) enrich the picture of the evaluative force of demonstratives by contributing quantitative evidence of such force. As discussed above, they show a clear relationship between using proximal demonstratives and expressing especially positive or negative sentiment in English, German, and Japanese. In addition, Potts and Schwarz (2010) find that among existential pivots (“there is *an/this X*”), those headed by *this* were significantly more likely to contain an evaluative adjective than those headed by *a(n)*. Furthermore, as noted above, Davis and Potts (2010) draw the Horn-inspired connection between demonstratives as marked forms giving rise to marked meanings. And, indeed, there is evidence that markedness matters when it comes to demonstratives and evaluativity/subjectivity. Many of the examples of evaluative demonstratives in the literature involve cases in which the demonstrative in question is syntactically optional, hence especially “marked.” We saw this, for instance, in examples involving proper names ((34), (35)) and generic demonstratives ((36), (37)). However, as also noted above, Davis and Potts (2010) do not go so far as to explain why demonstratives give rise to the

particular socio-expressive meanings and connotations that they do.

4.4.2 Explaining evaluativity: The case of *this*

Explaining the evaluativity of English demonstratives is in fact relatively straightforward. The explanation, in short, is this: demonstratives make salient the speaker and her orientation toward and perspective on a particular entity—in a way that other determiners and pronouns do not—and the perspective of an individual is the very essence of subjectivity. This feature of demonstratives, given the more general link between subjectivity and evaluativity, makes them ideal tools for personal stance-taking and expressing evaluativity. I will use *this* as the basis of the following discussion, because with *this*, the subjectivity of demonstratives is especially easy to see.

The subjectivity of *this*

On most if not all accounts of the semantics of *this*, the demonstrative bears some stipulation that the individual of interest is in some sense proximal to the agent of the speech act, who is the *origo* or *deictic center* of the use of a demonstrative (Bühler 1934, Lyons 1977)—i.e., “the centre of a coordinate system that underlies the conceptualization of the speech situation” (Diessel 2012: 3). On the present account, the denotation of *this* includes an accessibility feature which takes the speaker and the index/referent as arguments, and says something about the orientation of the former to the latter. Thus, the agent of the speech act and information about her relation to the index/referent are explicitly part of every use of *this*. One simply cannot use *this* without evoking the agent of the speech act and her orientation to the individual of interest (see, e.g., Levinson 2004; Wu 2008; Goethals 2013). Put another way, in using *this*, one necessarily expresses something about one’s position relative to—i.e., one’s perspective on—the individual of interest.

This is therefore inherently subjective even when not evaluative in the sense of expressing an attitude toward something—it always picks out its index vis-à-vis the agent and always, in effect, expresses something about the agent’s perspective on the relevant individual. In contrast, neither *the*, nor *a(n)*, nor any type-shifter proposed in the semantics literature on English incorporates the agent’s relation to or perspective on a particular individual. Relative to its competitors, then, *this* naturally engenders a personal and subjective tone.

From perspective and subjectivity to evaluativity

It is no wonder, then, that this inherently subjective, perspectival expression readily lends itself to stance-taking and evaluation. This is especially so given the tendencies of meaning change identified by Traugott (1987, 1988) in her work on pragmatic strengthening—among them: (i) the expansion from concrete to abstract meanings, such as the extension of the physical meanings of the verbs *apprehend* and *grasp* to include cognitive meanings; and (ii) movement toward meanings “increasingly situated in the speaker’s subjective belief-state/attitude toward the situation” (Traugott 1988: 410).²⁰

Others, too, have noted the perspectival nature (both physical and metaphorical) of demonstratives and appealed to this feature in explaining demonstrative usage. Though coming at things from a different angle, Riddle (2010), for example, appeals to this feature in her account of the use of demonstratives with proper names. In particular, Riddle claims

²⁰As an example of this second trend, Traugott (1988) cites the shift from the original meaning of *even* as simply “equal, horizontal” to its “scalar meaning, involving ‘contrary to exception’” as in:

(i) (1641) In Warre, even the conqueror is commonly a loser. (Traugott 1988 (3c))

Incidentally, German *selbst*, in addition to having its intensive reflexive use, can be translated into English as *even* (Eckardt 2001). The connection between intensive reflexives and *even* in certain circumstances in English is readily apparent:

(ii) a. Even the Queen attended the event.
 b. The Queen herself attended the event.

that demonstratives can express not only one's spatio-temporal relation to an individual, but also "metaphorical extensions thereof" including both "a discourse perspective and a personal stance or point of view, the latter comprising two subadvantages: affective, reflecting an emotional state, and epistemic, relating to state of knowledge" (Riddle 2010). Riddle's analysis draws on the work of Chen (1990), who similarly claims that "all the uses of [*this* and *that*] that previous writers have noted, such as denoting the spatial and temporal relationship to the speaker, referring anaphorically and cataphorically in discourse, expressing the speaker's emotion, and indicating the focus of attention, can be accounted for as a case of semantic expansion" (139).

The more general connection between perspective/subjectivity and evaluativity

The link between evoking one's position relative to something on one hand and expressing an opinion or attitude on the other runs clearly through English. For one, there are the qualifiers *from my perspective*, *as I see it*, *from where I'm sitting/standing*, etc.; and of course expressing an opinion on something is itself often referred to as "taking a position on [it]" or expressing one's "point of view." Even the way the terms *stance* and *stance-taking* are used exemplifies the link between concrete and abstract positioning relative to something.

Further evidence of the general link between positioning oneself vis-à-vis some entity or concept and expressing a personal stance or evaluation comes from the referentially extraneous use of the deictic locatives *here* and *there*. Just as these expressions, like demonstratives, can dial up the exclamativity of an utterance (Section 4.3.3), so, too, can they aid in expressing evaluativity. The following quotes from popular comedic films illustrate:

(38) [During a lecture in biology class, Billy Madison, an overage high school student, is responding to a quietly-issued insult from a female classmate, by loudly (and falsely) pretending that she asked him to "make-out" with her. The teacher has been lecturing on photosynthesis, and has just brought up the topic of chlorophyll]

Billy: No I will not make out with you! [to the class] Did you hear that? This girl

wants to make out with me in the middle of class! You got *Chlorophyll Man up there* talking about God knows what, and all she can talk about is making out with me. I'm here to learn, everybody, [turning to the female student] not to make out with you. [turning toward the teacher] Go on with the chlorophyll!²¹

- (39) [Greg is playing water volleyball with his girlfriend's family and family friends, and has not been performing well. Greg, a nurse, has also been made fun of for his occupation. In a team huddle consisting of Greg and three others, one of Greg's team-members derides his performance as follows]

Jack: We're getting creamed here people.

Larry: Well, if *Florence Nightingale over here* [nodding toward Greg] would play a little defense ...²²

In both cases, the referring DP is fully sufficient for securing reference—the locatives *here* and *there* instead serve primarily as stance-taking devices. In (38), the speaker's use of the phrase *up there* adds to the sense that he regards the teacher as obscure, and in (39), Larry's use of *over here* is dismissive of Greg and demotes him to non-addressee status in the small circle of four teammates.

Summary: *This* and evaluativity

I have provided a straightforward, principled account of why *this* has evaluative or attitudinal force: every use of *this* involves locating/positioning the individual of interest vis-à-vis the speaker, making *this* inherently subjective and perspectival. In turn, given the link between positioning and perspective on one hand and evaluativity and stance-taking on the other, *this* is particularly well suited among other determiners and pronouns for expressing personal stances and attitudes. Moreover, as discussed with respect to exclamation, uses of demonstratives that violate conversational expectations—as in cases where a less complex expression would serve the same referential purposes (e.g., *Henry Kissinger* rather than *this Henry Kissinger*)—are especially likely to be assigned special significance (VE

²¹*Billy Madison*. Universal Pictures. 1995.

²²*Meet the Parents*. Universal Pictures. 2000.

Principle). Given that part of what sets *this* apart from related expressions is that it is inherently subjective, use of a demonstrative, especially in such circumstances, can signal that the speaker's perspective is particularly relevant (FS and VE Principles), and likewise, given the link between perspective and evaluativity, can add a particularly evaluative tone to the utterance.

As with the other social meanings discussed in this work, the indexical association between *this* and evaluative stance-taking may of course be (indeed, likely is) so strong at this stage in the history of English that, at least in some circumstances, using *this* can signal the expression of an evaluative stance relatively directly, with no need for a derivation from the ground of entailed content in context. In any case, again we have the seed for a particular kind of social meaning in the entailed content of an expression and its relation to the entailed content of other expressions.

So much for *this*. Can the same general dynamics be said to hold for *that*?

4.4.3 The evaluativity of *that*

If, as many would have it (e.g., Elbourne 2008), *that* is marked for distance, then the account would be identical to the one given for *this*, except that the individual of interest would be located/positioned in part in virtue of being distal from, rather than close to, the speaker. But what if, as in the semantics for demonstratives developed in Wolter (2006) and herein, *that* is unmarked for distance/accessibility? In that case, the agent is not explicitly part of the denotation of *that*, calling into question whether *that* is in fact subjective and perspectival. This concern vanishes in light of the fact that *this* and *that*, being the only two English determiners containing a locating parameter, are in close competition. Thus a choice to use *that* is very saliently also a choice not to use *this*. In turn, *that* still positions the index/referent relative to the speech act agent, albeit via this pragmatic contrast. The importance of the agent's perspective in the choice of determiner is made especially clear

when the agent's choice of demonstrative, based on faulty beliefs about the location of the index/referent, clashes with the actual relation between the agent and the index/referent. Consider the following example:

- (40) [Earlier in the day, the speaker spots a rather large, hairy spider running across his kitchen floor, escaping before he can dispose of it. Later, while doing dishes, the speaker recounts his arachnid problem to his friend. Wearing kitchen gloves, he does not realize that the spider is actually crawling on the palm of his hand as he says:]

I tell you what, that lousy spider's gonna wish he never set eight feet in my kitchen.

In most circumstances, in referring to something in the palm of one's hand, *this* is the likely choice among English demonstratives. The speaker's use of *that* in (40) reflects his beliefs about his position relative to the spider, rather than the spider's actual accessibility to him, of which he is unaware. Hence we see the subjective, perspectival nature of *that*, regardless of whether it actually includes a (non-)accessibility feature—the speaker's beliefs about and conception of the position of the index/referent is crucial.

It is possible, however, that *that* is somewhat less prone than *this* to conveying evaluativity—the results of Potts and Schwarz (2010), who find that using *that* is less closely associated with issuing especially high or low ratings to products than is *this*, are certainly consistent with this possibility. However, as noted in the discussion on the exclaimativity of demonstratives, the differences between *this* and *that* observed by Potts and Schwarz (2010) are potentially attributable to a number of factors. Furthermore, exclaimativity and evaluativity are separable, and a lack of the former does not entail a lack of the latter. It is therefore too soon to say that *this* is more closely associated with evaluativity.

What about languages that have only one demonstrative, and one that does not encode any “deictic contrast”? Even such demonstratives are still more subjective than a definite or indefinite article, or any related type-shifter, in virtue of their locating parameter. For the value of the locating parameter—i.e., the search space—is set by the speaker, and it is the addressee's job, with the help of cues such as gestures, to figure out what search space

the speaker has in mind. To be sure, even the determination of a “default situation,” as required by a *the*-DP involves consulting the speaker’s perspective and intentions, but in the case of demonstratives, the locating parameter means doing so over and above what is required by *the*-DPs. For instance, the frequent use of pointing gestures with German *dies* (Diessel 1999)—a determiner argued to be a demonstrative that does not stand in a relation of deictic contrast to any other determiner (Himmelmann 1997; Diessel 1999)—suggests that determining the referent of a *dies*-DP involves determining what search space the speaker has in mind. In this sense, demonstratives, being especially dependent on the speaker’s intentions and relation to the index/referent, are especially subjective relative to other determiners and pronouns, and are especially well suited for stance-taking and evaluative statements. Whether demonstratives that have no feature of deictic contrast lend themselves to evaluative stance-taking to the same degree as other demonstratives is an open question.

4.4.4 Section summary

English demonstratives, being inherently subjective and perspectival, are prime candidates among determiners for evaluative stance-taking. This propensity is separate, but surely not fully separable, from their emphatic force. The extent to which the link between demonstratives and evaluativity is indexically entrenched at present is an important matter for future work, as is the question of whether *this* and *that*, being differentially marked, are likewise used to express evaluativity to different degrees.

4.5 Demonstratives and sharedness

In this section I will discuss one additional component of the affective nature of demonstratives—namely, their potential for reflecting or fostering a sense of shared perspective, empathy, and solidarity between individuals. This topic is the main focus of my

joint research with Christopher Potts on demonstratives in Acton and Potts (2014), much of which will be discussed herein.

4.5.1 Connections between demonstratives and sharedness

Various studies, coming from different perspectives, have converged on a link between demonstrative use and “shared perspective,” “solidarity,” “shared common ground,” “empathy,” “camaraderie,” and the like (Lakoff 1974; Fillmore 1975; Wolter 2006; Liberman 2008; Wu 2008; Liberman 2010; Potts and Schwarz 2010; Acton and Potts 2014). I will highlight a few of the key claims and insights here and provide some additional examples; for a similar review of the literature, from which many of the forthcoming examples and commentary are drawn, see Acton and Potts (2014).

Qualitative research

Lakoff (1974: 353) claims that *that* can provide “a means of reaching out to other people, saying, ‘We share this – we’re in this together,’” citing examples like (41), as said by a garage mechanic to a customer, where the former is said to express solidarity in a way that the latter does not.

- (41) a. That left front tire is pretty worn. (Lakoff 1974 (32))
 b. Your left front tire is pretty worn. (Lakoff 1974 (33))

Lakoff (1974: 352) also claims that *that* can “establish emotional solidarity between [speaker and addressee] by implying that both participants share the same views toward the subject of discussion,” as discussed above in the section on evaluativity. Further still, Lakoff (1974: 347) claims that demonstratives have a solidarity-enhancing effect in virtue of being emotionally charged, “since expressing emotion [...] is a means of achieving camaraderie.” Thus, for Lakoff, demonstratives are tools for fostering solidarity not only because they can suggest shared experience and shared views, but also indirectly, because

they are connected with expressing emotion.

In a pair of Language Log posts, Liberman (2008, 2010) offers a similar discussion of what he calls *affective demonstratives*, focusing on U.S. politician Sarah Palin’s frequent use of these expressions. According to Liberman, Palin “intends [for demonstratives] to carry an emotional as well as a demonstrative load,” (Liberman 2008: n.p.) as a means for “establish[ing] fellowship with the audience,” by “treating [referents] as ‘assumed to be known’ to the audience” (Liberman 2010: n.p.). In a particularly illustrative tribute to Palin, Liberman (2010: n.p.) claims that Palin uses affective demonstratives so frequently, “because she is welcoming all of us into the familiar space of that good old American experience there.”²³ Citing the following quote from Palin from the 2008 vice presidential debate, Liberman (2010: n.p.) comments: “We all know the warning bell she’s talking about, right? That one over there, always in the back of our shared experience.”

(42) [...] it was John McCain who pushed so hard with the Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac reform measures. He sounded *that warning bell*.

Bowdle and Ward (1995) similarly suggest a presupposition of shared familiarity for demonstratives with generic readings, claiming they “must represent a kind assumed to be already familiar to the hearer. That is, the kind itself must constitute private shared knowledge (Joshi 1982).” Wolter (2006: 83), too, claims that there is a sense of sharedness associated with demonstratives—in particular, that “emotive” uses of demonstratives convey, “that the discourse participants share some relevant knowledge or emotion about the referent of the demonstrative.”²⁴

More examples

Examples of demonstratives suggesting sharedness between speaker and addressee run throughout English, across genres, from consumer product descriptions to scholarship to

²³ Again, we see a connection between the use of *that* and its corresponding adverb *there*.

²⁴ See also Chen’s 1990 comments on “camaraderie-*that* and -*this*.”

poetry to political debate to song:

- (43) “[S]alon-quality products without the salon price tag, so you can experience *that salon feeling* everyday. Like your favorite ‘Little Black Dress’ TRESemmé will never let you down, or go out of style.”
- Product description for TRESemmé hair conditioner
- (44) “*These doctrines of “directness” and “indirectness”* are both descriptive and theoretical dead-ends for comprehending cross-culturally how people use the semiotic resources of language in the social contexts of consequential communication [...]”
- Silverstein (2010: 351)
- (45) “[H]e closed his eyes upon *that last picture*, common to us all [...]”
- W.H. Auden. “In memory of Sigmund Freud.” (1939).
- (46) “[...] but John McCain thought the answer is *that tried and true Republican response*, deregulate, deregulate.”
- Joe Biden. U.S. vice presidential debate. (2008).
- (47) It’s got to be ‘cause I’m seasoned haters gimme *them salty looks*.
- Kanye West. “Good Life.” (2007).²⁵

Frank Sinatra, like Sarah Palin, was a prolific user of such demonstratives, which can be found sprinkled throughout his catalog. Often where Sinatra referred to something without a demonstrative the first time through a verse or chorus, he later referred to that same thing with a demonstrative in a reprise of that same verse or chorus. His recording of “Same Old Saturday Night” for Capitol Records illustrates. Early in the song, he sings, “How I wish you’d lift the phone—fun is fun, but not alone.” Then, after a musical interlude, having set the scene, he pleads, “How I wish you’d lift *that* phone.” And there are many more such examples:

- (48) Song: “All of me.” (1954)
- a. Take my arms, I’ll never use them.
 - b. Get a piece of these arms, I’ll never use them.

²⁵*Them* as used in this context is a dialectal variant of *those*.

- (49) Song: “Learnin’ the Blues.” (1955)
- a. The blues will haunt your memory.
 - b. Those blues will haunt your memory.
- (50) Song: “It Happened in Monterey.” (1956)
- a. My indiscreet heart longs for the sweetheart that I left in old Monterey.
 - b. My indiscreet heart, how it longs for that sweetheart that I left in old Monterey.
- (51) Song: “Witchcraft.” (1957)
- a. ‘Cause it’s witchcraft, wicked witchcraft.
 - b. ‘Cause it’s witchcraft, that crazy witchcraft.

A similar contrast can be found in Sinatra’s performances of “You Make Me Feel So Young.” In his 1956 recorded rendition of the song, Sinatra sings, “You and I are just like a couple o’ tots / Runnin’ along the meadow, pickin’ up lots o’ forget-me-nots.” Later, in a live 1972 performance at Royal Festival Hall, before an audience presumably well acquainted with his work, he plays with the lyrics, incorporating a demonstrative: “You and I, we are just like a couple o’ tots / Runnin’ along the meadow, snatchin’ up all those forget-a-me-nots,” he sings, as if to say, “you and I know the (that) old scene I’m singing about.” Such stylistic moves could have multiple motivations, including adding a sense of emphasis; as suggested by Sinatra’s exclamative *how* in (50b). But, for this listener at least, they also add an extra sense of shared familiarity.

The examples to this point might suggest that, between *this* and *that*, only *that* can be used to engender or enhance a sense of sharedness or camaraderie between interlocutors. But the literature on affective uses of demonstratives suggests that proximal demonstratives have a role to play as well. *This*, says Lakoff (1974) can “give greater vividness to [a] narrative [and] involve the addressee in it more fully,” commenting on examples of indefinite *this* like (52).

- (52) a. There was this traveling salesman, and he. . . (Lakoff 1974 (10))
- b. He kissed her with this unbelievable passion. (Lakoff 1974 (11))

Moreover, the purported presumption of shared private knowledge associated with generic demonstratives is said to hold regardless of whether or not the demonstrative in question is proximal (Bowdle and Ward 1995).

This, like *that*, shows up time and time again in song lyrics, and indeed seems to pull the listener into the situation described:

- (53) a. There must be some way that I can lose these lonesome blues.
 - Don Gibson. “Oh Lonesome Me.” (1958)
- b. This old heart of mine been broke a thousand times.
 -The Isley Brothers. “This Old Heart of Mine (Is Weak for You.)” (1966)
- c. Don’t leave me this way.
 - Harold Melvin & the Blue Notes. “Don’t Leave Me This Way.” (1975)
- d. I can’t fight this feeling anymore.
 - REO Speedwagon. “Can’t Fight This Feeling.” (1985).
- e. He’s the cutest brother in here, and he’s comin’ this way!
 - Salt ‘N’ Pepa. “Shoop.” (1993).
- f. You ain’t gonna have no face to save by the time I’m through with this place.
 - Eminem, featured on Drake’s “Forever.” (2009)

Quantitative research

Acton and Potts (2014) add to the discussion above in part by providing quantitative evidence that demonstratives can be used to establish or reinforce a sense of sharedness between interlocutors. The authors examined a corpus of over 200,000 personal stories and reflections posted by users on the “Confessions” portion of the social media website ExperienceProject.com (EP).

At the time of data collection, EP allowed users to respond to each other’s posts via two means: (i) writing text comments or (ii) clicking on one of the five pre-set reaction categories: “I understand,” “Sorry, hugs,” “You rock,” “Teehee,” and “Wow, just wow.” Acton and Potts find that these reaction categories generally correspond to expressions of empathy and shared experience (“I understand”), consolation and sympathy (“Sorry,

hugs”), upbeat cheering (“You rock”), amusement (“Teehee”), and disapproval (“Wow, just wow”).

Table 4.1, drawing from Table 1 from Acton and Potts (2014), provides an example post, along with its associated responses. As suggested in the table, users’ comments on a given confession generally line up intuitively with the distribution of clicks on the pre-set reaction categories. We see, for instance, that of the 12 reaction clicks associated with the confession, ten are of the “I understand” category, and the other two are “Sorry, hugs.” The text comments, where we see expressions of shared experience and empathy, align with this distribution: “Know the feeling”; “I feel the same”; etc.

Confession: Do you ever have one of those days where you just sit around and think about how much your life sucks? I’m having one of those days.
Reactions: Sorry, hugs: 2; You rock: 0; Teehee: 0, I understand: 10, Wow, just wow: 0
Comment: Know the feeling.
Comment: I feel the same today. Good luck getting through it.
Comment: Totally.

Table 4.1: Sample Experience Project confession with associated reaction data and comments. (Drawn from Acton and Potts 2014.)

These meta-data provide valuable information about how users’ confessions were evaluated by other users, in turn providing a useful means for getting a sense of the social meaning of different facets of users’ language in the corpus. With respect to demonstratives, on the theory that they can reflect or foster shared experience and fellow-feeling, a natural hypothesis is that use of demonstratives in a post is likely to be relatively highly associated with “I understand” reactions to that confession.

Figure 4.3(a) (reproduced from Acton and Potts 2014) presents the distribution of reactions to posts containing demonstratives, controlling for the overall frequencies of the reactions in the corpus as a whole (for more on the methodology, see Acton and Potts 2014). Figure 4.3(b) (also reproduced from Acton and Potts 2014) shows the same thing

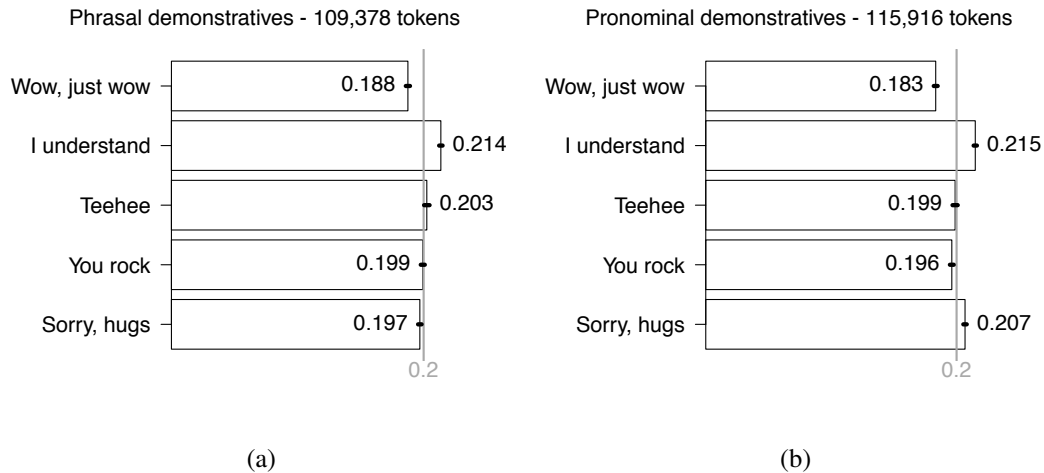


Figure 4.3: Demonstratives and sharedness in the EP data. (Reproduced from Acton and Potts 2014.)

for pronominal demonstratives. Values at the grey 0.2 line suggest no interesting association between the word and the reaction category; values above, a relatively high association; and values below, a relatively low association. The small black bar on each of the columns represents a 95 percent confidence interval for the estimate.

As the figures show, the hypothesis is confirmed: the “I understand” estimate is well above the 0.2 “null” line for both determiner and pronominal uses of demonstratives, suggesting that if a demonstrative is to elicit a reaction, it is especially likely that the reaction will be of the “I understand” category, even taking into account the relative frequency of “I understand” reactions across the entire corpus. In other words, sharedness and mutual understanding are central to the affective profile of demonstratives in the EP community.

Jürgen Bohnemeyer (p.c.) suggests that, in principle, elevated estimates for any of the reaction categories except “Wow, just wow,” which is generally used in the EP community to express disapproval and anti-solidarity, would be consistent with the claim that demonstratives encourage a sense of shared perspective and commonality, on the grounds that all of the other categories seem to involve siding with the writer of the confession in one way

or another. Indeed, “Sorry, hugs,” and “You rock,” are both supportive, and “Teehee,” at least in many cases, is as well (though it can also be used on the site for poking fun at someone). At the same time, however, one can be supportive or approving without feeling or expressing a sense of shared perspective or shared experience, and vice versa. Of all the categories, it is “I understand” that is most consistently associated with demonstrative use in the corpus, and it is this reaction category that most clearly gets at the issue of shared perspective and shared experience. As for the disapproving “Wow, just wow,” we find that this is the one category for which the estimate for a given demonstrative is always below 0.2, consistent with demonstratives promoting a sense of sharedness.

In brief, among the five reaction categories available to users for responding to confessions, the one most closely associated with the use of demonstratives in confessions in general is “I understand”—even taking into account that “I understand” is a frequently used reaction category in the corpus as a whole. This suggests that eliciting reactions of understanding, shared experience, and shared perspective is central to the social force of demonstrative use on the EP website.

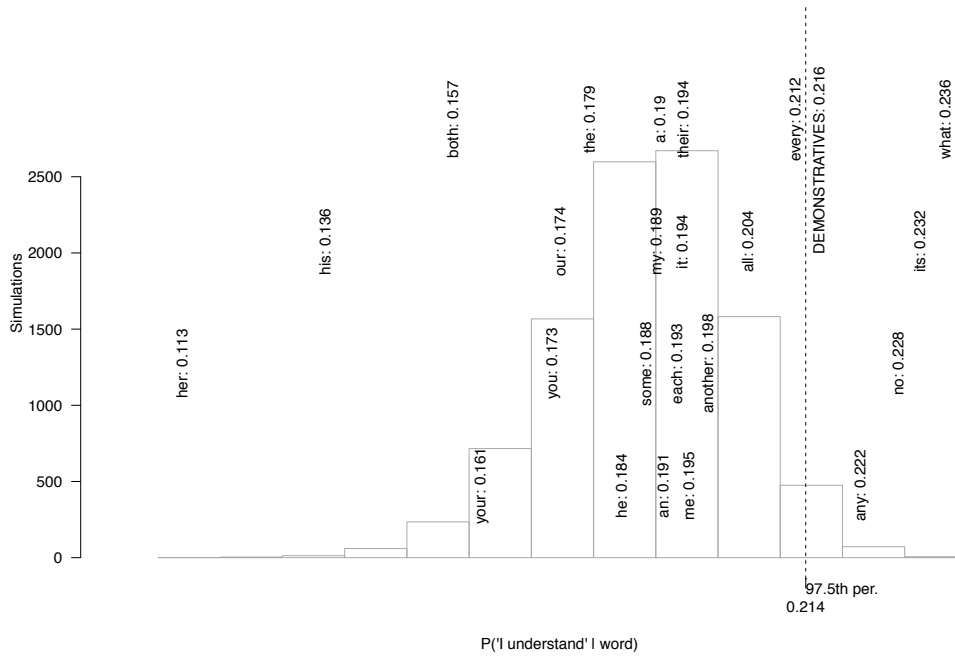
To better understand how demonstratives relate to other expressions in this regard, Acton and Potts (2014) compared the average “I understand” estimate for demonstrative determiners to that of all other determiners in the corpus, and did the same for pronominal demonstratives and all other pronouns.²⁶ For each comparison, they took the average of a random sample of four “I understand” estimates from the comparison class (excluding demonstratives) 10,000 times to bootstrap a distribution against which to compare the average value for demonstratives. The results, reproduced from Acton and Potts (2014), are shown in Figure 4.4. Among all other determiners, the average “I understand” estimate for demonstrative determiners is above the 97.5th percentile of the distribution. Among all other pronouns, the average for pronominal demonstratives is well above the average for

²⁶The average “I understand” estimates for demonstratives displayed in Figure 4.4 differ slightly from those in Figure 4.3 because in Figure 4.4 they are calculated only relative to other determiners/pronouns rather than every word in the corpus. For more on the details of the analysis, see Acton and Potts (2014).

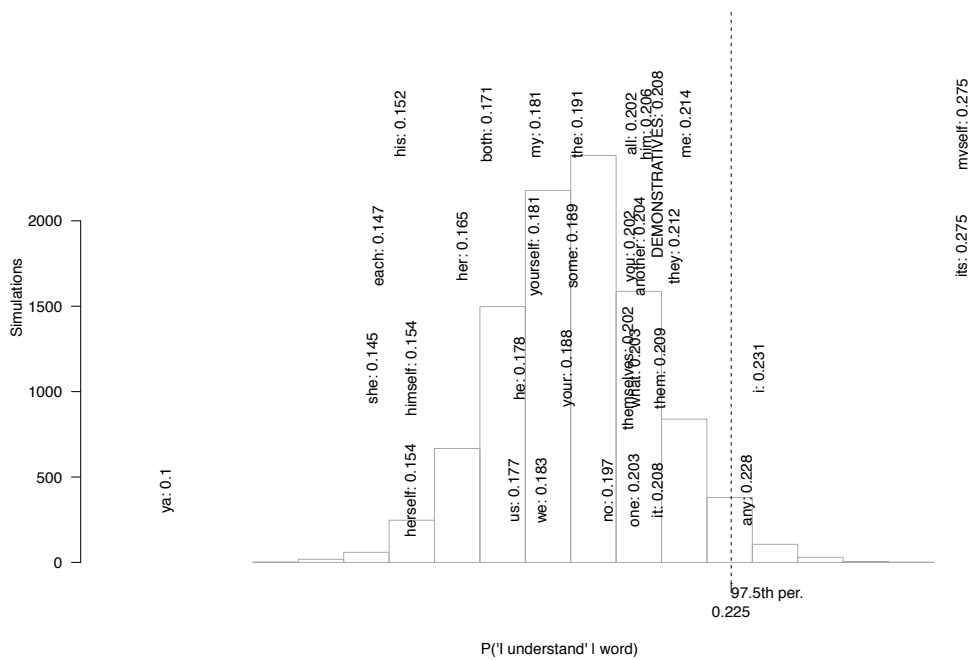
the distribution, but also well below the 97.5th percentile. As noted in Acton and Potts (2014), this may be due to the correlation between the use of first-person singular pronouns and negative affective states such as depression (Chung and Pennebaker 2007), such that confessions with first-person singular pronouns tend to deal with such emotional states, in turn eliciting empathetic responses. Three of the six pronouns with “I understand” values greater than the average for pronominal demonstratives are first-person singular pronouns: *myself*, *I*, and *me*.

To summarize, Acton and Potts (2014) find that on the social media website ExperienceProject.com, taking into account the distribution of different reactions on the site in general, use of demonstratives in one’s posts is more closely associated with reactions expressing understanding, shared experience and shared perspective than with any other reaction category. Demonstratives stand out significantly in this regard relative to other determiners, and also show this tendency more than the average pronoun. Moreover, use of demonstratives is less closely associated with reactions expressing condemnation and disapproval than with any other reaction category on the site. Thus the findings of Acton and Potts (2014) support the claim that demonstrative use can reflect or foster a sense of shared perspective and experience and mutual understanding—at least within the online EP community.

Nor are the sharedness effects of demonstratives limited to English. Ono (1994: 133), working on Japanese, claims that “the anaphoric a-series can ensure a sense of solidarity and mutual reference between speaker and hearer.” And Potts and Schwarz (2010) present evidence of a solidarity effect for German *dies*. It seems, then, that there is something inherent in demonstratives that gives rise to such effects.



(a) Demonstrative determiners compared with other determiners.



(b) Pronominal demonstratives compared with other pronouns.

Figure 4.4: Demonstratives and sharedness relative to other determiners and pronouns in the EP data. (Reproduced from Acton and Potts 2014.)

4.5.2 Explaining the effects

As with the other effects discussed in this chapter, I trace the effects at hand to what sets demonstratives apart from other, related expressions (FS Principle) in terms of entailed content. Let me begin by agreeing, at least in part, with Lakoff's (1974: 347) claim that "expressing emotion is [...] a means of achieving camaraderie." It does in fact seem to be the case that, at least in my experience of North American culture, expressing emotion is more common in personal interactions than in impersonal ones, and emotional candor can serve to establish intimacy. It is certainly reasonable, then, that the emotional force of demonstratives plays a role in fostering a sense of sharedness, camaraderie, solidarity, and the like. But I submit that there are other forces at work as well.

The accessibility feature and the shared space of the speaker and addressee

The distinguishing characteristic of *this* among all other English determiners and pronouns is its accessibility feature, which takes into account the accessibility of the index/referent for the speaker and the addressees. Interpreting and choosing to use a token of *this* make salient the speaker and addressees' shared space in a very real way: the accessibility feature places the two participants in a relevant space (physical or metaphorical) and relates them to each other vis-à-vis the individual of interest.

The same goes for *that*, although perhaps via pragmatic competition rather than entailment. If there is some non-accessibility feature (the complement of the accessibility feature) in the semantics of *that*, then *that*, too, places speaker and addressee in a shared space in virtue of its entailed content. If, as adopted herein, *that* does not have such a feature, the close relatedness of *this* and *that* (see Section 4.4.3) leads to the same kind of effect. Being the counterpart of *this* and the only other determiner or pronoun in English to have a locating parameter, *that*—which often implicates that the relevant entity is not particularly accessible to the speaker either in absolute terms or relative to the addressee(s)—also

makes salient the speaker and addressees' relation to the entity of interest and to each other. That demonstratives foreground the speaker and addressee's shared space is reflected in Lakoff's (1974) explanation of the purported shared-emotions effect of *that*: "Spatial *that* establishes a link between speaker and addressee: it enables them to relate spatially to one another, through the intermediacy of the object alluded to. The same thing, perhaps," she conjectures, "is happening [...] emotionally" (353).

Already we have an understanding of the intuition that demonstratives "draw us [the audience] in" (Lieberman 2010: n.p.); "create in the hearer a sense of participation" (Lakoff 1974: 347); and "invite the audience onto a common ground of shared knowledge" (Lieberman 2010: "Mark Lieberman said:"). Demonstratives very literally involve the addressee(s). Furthermore, this principle applies not only to definite uses of demonstratives but indefinite uses as well. Lakoff's (1974) claim that indefinite *this*, "seems to give greater vividness to the narrative, to involve the addressee in it more fully," (347), in addition to according with intuitions, makes good sense given the accessibility features of *this* and *these*. The accessibility feature incorporates the addressee into the very descriptive content of these expressions, and the addressee is made to feel that she is part of the scene being described.

Perspectival alignment

But demonstratives do more than remind the speaker and addressee of their shared space. As discussed at length in Section 4.4.3 (see also Acton and Potts 2014), demonstratives call on the addressee to consider the speaker's perspective in determining what is being talked about, beyond what is called for by other determiners and third-person pronouns. Whereas *the*-DPs and third-person pronouns, for instance, are evaluated relative to "default situations" (Wolter 2006) (or in Roberts's 2002 terms, don't presuppose a demonstration), the successful interpretation of a demonstrative requires the resolution of the locating parameter—addressees must figure out in what search space they are to find the individual of interest. Identifying the search space and locating the relevant individual involves a

special degree of coordination between speaker and addressee. The addressee must have sufficient access to the speaker's point of view, her position and orientation, her goals, proclivities, intentions, etc. (Roberts 2002; Clark and Schreuder 1983) to determine the appropriate search space.

To illustrate, consider the following game. Two people, one wearing a blindfold, stand before an array of identically sized, differently colored square tiles. The non-blindfolded person, Y, is given five seconds to describe a specially marked tile to the blindfolded person, X, in hopes that after the mark on the tile and the blindfold have been removed, the formerly blindfolded person will be able to pick out the formerly marked tile. If in this circumstance, Y says,

(54) It's the green one.

X can be confident that she will be able to identify the tile of interest. All the information she needs is incorporated in the DP *per se*: the definite article suggests that there is one and only one tile in the relevant situation that has the lexically-specified property required by the DP, namely, being a "green one." That is, X need only find the single green tile in the array. If, on the other hand, Y says,

(55) It's that green one.

X may have cause for concern. Based on the semantics of *that*, (55) allows for there to be more than one green tile, for *that* presupposes not that there is only one tile satisfying the property encoded by *green one* in the default situation, but that there is only one tile that satisfies that property and is contained in some contextually determined search space. Thus, in our example, because X is entirely unfamiliar with the array of tiles at hand, and therefore has virtually no access to Y's relation to the relevant tile or the tile-array as a whole, she has reason to fear that she will not be able to secure the referent of *that green one*—she has very little to go on in determining what search space to look in. She may well hope that there is a particularly salient green tile in the array, or that there is only one, but one so remarkable as to elicit an exclamative *that*. In any case, X will likely have less

confidence after hearing (55) than if she had heard (54), because the latter presupposes a special degree of access to Y's relation to the potential referents.

If the game were modified, however, such that there were a pre-game round during which partners could examine the array together and develop a strategy for the game round, it would not necessarily be strange for Y to say (55) in the game round. In that case, X could surmise that Y was referring to some tile that was not only green but that was salient for both X and Y as a result of their discussion during the pre-game round—hence the “shared private knowledge” phenomenon discussed by Bowdle and Ward (1995) (who attribute the concept to Joshi 1982). In this way, the resolution of the locating parameter typically involves an extra level of shared perspective and experience not called for by other determiners and third-person pronouns.

4.5.3 Sources of the sharedness effect of demonstratives, in brief

Thus, multiple related forces all point toward demonstratives encouraging a sense of shared perspective and common ground. In addition to any boost afforded by the emotionality of demonstratives à la Lakoff (1974), using a demonstrative places the speaker and addressee in a shared space (given the accessibility feature of *this*) and calls on the addressee to consider the speaker's perspective and the knowledge and experience the speaker and addressee share in determining the relevant search space. Moreover, as noted in Acton and Potts (2014), using a demonstrative also signals confidence on the part of the speaker that the speaker and addressee share enough experience and perspective that the use of the demonstrative will succeed—providing further opportunity for fostering a sense of sharedness. Once again, the characteristics of demonstratives that distinguish them from related expressions are the seed of the social meaning of interest, in keeping with the FS Principle.

On top of that, Acton and Potts (2014) point out that we ought to expect certain uses to be especially potent as regards this effect. As with the other effects discussed in this

chapter, uses where a demonstrative is referentially extraneous (e.g., *this Henry Kissinger v. Henry Kissinger*) set the stage for high affectivity. Such uses run up against conversational expectations as far as descriptive content is concerned (such as Grice's maxim of Manner), drawing on a form more complex than necessary for the purposes of securing reference. To the extent that such expectations are in force, we should expect to find special significance attached to such uses of demonstratives (VE Principle). Thus, such uses can invite the inference that the speaker is attempting to indicate or highlight that she and her addressee share experience, sentiment, or perspective—just as such uses can signal exclamation or evaluativity. The same goes for other cases where a determiner other than a demonstrative is expected, as in the difference between “my arms” and “these arms” in the Sinatra example in (48).

Exceptions

The foregoing discussion is not to say that demonstratives uniformly contribute to a sense of shared perspective, common ground, and the like. While qualitative and quantitative evidence point to such effects, the ultimate social meaning of a demonstrative in a given context depends importantly on features of that context (FS Principle). The sharedness effects observed in the EP community, for instance, likely depend in part on the generally empathetic tenor of the community, so that attempts at establishing or highlighting sharedness are met with open arms.

But, in principle, using demonstratives could have a nearly opposite effect. The accessibility feature of *this*, for instance, could be a device for highlighting differential accessibility in order to taunt someone. Imagine a child dangling a toy over another child, chanting:

(56) You can't have this!

Furthermore, as observed in Wolter (2006), demonstrative use can come across as fake, presumptuous, or offensive. Acton and Potts (2014) brought empirical substantiation to

this claim in the form of a case study of U.S. politician Sarah Palin. They found that, compared with other guests on Fox News talk shows, Palin is an extraordinarily frequent user of demonstratives, and that she uses demonstratives in especially affective ways, as part of a broader style of “reaching out” and being familiar. They found also that reactions to Palin’s speech, like reactions to her persona, are highly polarized, such that proponents characterized her speech as relatable and friendly, while opponents characterized her speech as phony and disingenuous. In this way, the use of demonstratives doesn’t always foster sharedness and solidarity. It can also have a repellent, presumptuous effect, if the gestures toward commonality and invitations to consider the speaker’s perspective that accompany demonstrative use are unwarranted or unwanted—in the same way that referring to a new acquaintance on first-name basis can be considered unduly familiar and therefore offensive. This is similar to the dynamic uncovered in Campbell-Kibler’s (2007) work on *-ing* (noted in Chapter 1), in which she found that the use of the more “easygoing” apical variant can come across as pretentious or condescending if the addressee perceives the variant as being inappropriate. Just as in the case of phonological variables like the pronunciation of *-ing*, contextual factors like the nature of the relationship between speaker and addressee are essential to how a given demonstrative will be interpreted (FS Principle).

4.5.4 Section summary

In brief, demonstratives, in virtue of their locating parameter and, in the case of *this*, accessibility parameter—the features that separate demonstratives from related expressions in terms of entailed content—highlight the shared space of the speaker and addressee and require that the addressee consider the speaker’s perspective to a special degree. In turn, especially relative to those other expressions, demonstratives serve as useful tools for establishing or fostering a sense of sharedness between speaker and addressee. As with all of the other cases of social meaning discussed in this work, demonstratives are especially

potent in this regard where their use runs up against conversational expectations (VE Principle). Also parallel to the other cases of social meaning explored herein, it seems likely that sharedness between speaker and addressee is an important enough part of the indexical/associative content of demonstratives that, at this stage, it is not necessarily derived in context from the ground of entailed content up.

4.6 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I provided an account of the entailed content of demonstratives, drawing in large part on the work of Elbourne (2008) and Wolter (2006). Like Wolter (2006), I claim demonstratives come with a locating parameter, the value of which in a given use is a contextually determined search space in which the referent (more precisely, index) is to be found. Also like Wolter (2006), I claimed that while *this* has a proximity-related feature, *that* does not. Departing from the existing literature on English demonstratives, I claimed that the crucial notion upon which this feature is based is accessibility, and that use of *this* presupposes that the index/referent x meets some contextually determined threshold for accessibility to the speaker, and that x is at least as accessible to the speaker as to any of the addressees.

These two features—the locating parameter and the accessibility feature—are what distinguish demonstratives from all other English determiners and pronouns in terms of descriptive content. In keeping with the FS Principle, I tied these distinguishing features to three aspects of the social meaning of demonstratives: speaker exclamation, speaker evaluativity, and sharedness between interlocutors. The locating parameter makes demonstratives especially useful tools for highlighting and setting something apart, which in turn lends them an emphatic, exclamative force. Demonstratives are also inherently subjective and perspectival expressions, positioning the index/referent vis-à-vis the speaker in virtue

of their locating parameter and accessibility feature, and are thus well suited for stance-taking and expressing evaluativity. Finally, demonstratives provide a means for establishing and fostering a sense of sharedness between speaker and addressee in that they place the speaker and addressee in shared space and presuppose a special degree of coordination and perspectival alignment between them. As with other non-entailed meanings, all of these meanings are especially likely to arise or to be particularly potent where the use of a demonstrative violates conversational expectations (VE Principle).

An important line of questions concerns how language users arrive at a particular social meaning for a given use of a demonstrative. Under what circumstances do demonstratives convey, say, exclamation over and above sharedness? When do they convey both? What is the strength of the indexical link between demonstratives and the meanings discussed in this chapter? What other social meanings do they convey? We have already discussed how demonstratives can be socially repellent. How else might using demonstratives have unintended consequences? Another important question is how the affective profiles of *this* and *that* (and *these* and *those*) differ. As alluded to throughout this chapter, on the theory that *this* bears an accessibility feature and *that* is silent in that regard, the socio-pragmatic framework of Chapter 1 predicts that the two will give rise to different social meanings and associations born of this difference.

In demonstratives, we see again the inextricability of meaning and the social, and the advantages of pursuing sociolinguistic, pragmatic, and semantic research in tandem.

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