

The relationship between demonstratives and interrogatives

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This paper examines two types of expressions that seem to exist in all languages, demonstratives and interrogatives. Based on a representative sample of 100 languages it is shown that demonstratives and interrogatives have some striking features in common. They cross-cut the boundaries of several word classes and encode the same semantic features: person, thing, place, direction, manner, time, and amount. It is the central hypothesis of this study that the crosslinguistic parallelism between demonstratives and interrogatives is motivated by their pragmatic functions: both initiate a search for information that is guided by their semantic and syntactic features. Further, it is argued that demonstratives and interrogatives have a special status in language. Although both types of expressions are commonly considered grammatical markers, they do not serve an ordinary grammatical function. Grammatical markers organize the information flow in the ongoing discourse, whereas basic demonstratives and interrogatives are immediately concerned with the speaker-hearer interaction.

1. Introduction

Traditional grammar distinguishes five major types of pronouns: demonstrative pronouns, interrogative pronouns, indefinite pronouns, relative pronouns, and personal pronouns. Three of these five types — indefinite, relative and personal pronouns — are commonly derived from other lexemes. In fact, the most common historical sources of these three types of pronouns are probably demonstratives and interrogatives: indefinite pronouns are often based on unaccented question words, relative pronouns may evolve from either demonstratives or interrogatives, and third person pronouns are frequently derived from pronominal demonstratives.¹

This paper examines the relationship between demonstratives and interrogatives and considers their status in language. Demonstratives are deictic terms, which in their basic use function to focus the hearer's attention on elements in the surrounding situation. Interrogatives are question words, which instruct the hearer to search for a specific piece of information in his or her knowledge store. Crosslinguistically, demonstratives and interrogatives seem to be historically unrelated; there is at least no obvious diachronic pathway leading from one to the other. However, although demonstratives and interrogatives are historically unrelated, they are strikingly similar. They tend to encode the same semantic features and have a number of morphosyntactic properties in common. It is the central hypothesis of this study that the parallelism between demonstratives and interrogatives is motivated by similar pragmatic functions: both types of expressions initiate a search for information that is guided by their semantic and syntactic features.

Further, it is argued that demonstratives and interrogatives have a special status in language. In functional linguistics, words and morphemes are commonly divided into two major types: lexical expressions and grammatical markers. Since demonstratives and interrogatives are closed class items that are often used with language-internal functions, they are commonly considered grammatical markers; however, in their basic uses they do not serve an ordinary grammatical function (i.e. a language-internal function): both types of expressions are commonly used as directives that instruct the hearer to search for a specific piece of information outside of discourse (i.e. in the surrounding situation or in the hearer's knowledge store). What is more, while grammatical markers are commonly derived from lexical expressions, demonstratives and interrogatives cannot be traced back to lexical items. While both are often reinforced by other lexemes, there is no evidence from any language that a new demonstrative or interrogative developed from a lexical source (unless the lexical source first functioned to reinforce a genuine demonstrative or interrogative). All this suggests that demonstratives and interrogatives have a special status in language and should be kept separate from genuine grammatical markers.

The analysis is based on a representative sample of 100 languages selected from a wide range of language families and linguistic areas. A complete list of these languages is given at the end of the paper in the appendix.

2. Analysis

2.1 Syntactic features

Demonstratives and interrogatives subsume a variety of expressions that cross-cut the boundaries of several word classes. They may function as independent pronouns, determiners and adverbs. Table 1 shows the demonstratives and interrogatives in standard English.

As can be seen in this table, English uses the same demonstratives as independent pronouns and determiners. Both are expressed by *this* and *that* and the corresponding plural forms. However, in about a quarter of the world's languages demonstrative pronouns and demonstrative determiners have different forms (cf. Diessel forthcoming a). For instance, French uses the demonstratives *celle* and *celui* as independent pronouns and *ce* and *cette* as determiners.

Like the demonstratives *this* and *that*, the interrogative *what* can be both a pronoun and determiner; however, *who* is only used as an interrogative pronoun and *which* can only function as a determiner. In other languages, interrogative pronouns and determiners are sometimes more systematically distinguished or they are not distinguished at all. For instance, in Japanese all interrogative pronouns are formally distinct from interrogative determiners, and in Finnish the two basic interrogatives, *kuka* 'who' and *mikä* 'what', are used both as pronouns and determiners. In general, there is significant cross-linguistic variation in the marking of demonstratives and interrogatives functioning as pronouns and determiners.

While many languages employ the same demonstratives and interrogatives as pronouns and determiners, adverbial demonstratives and interrogatives are usually expressed by special forms. There are only a few languages in the sample in which adverbial demonstratives and interrogatives are morphologically identical to the corresponding pronouns and determiners. One of these languages is Acehnese, where the demonstrative particles *nyoe* 'proximal', *nyan*

Table 1. Demonstrative and interrogative pronouns, determiners, and adverbs in English

	Demonstratives	Interrogatives
Pronoun	<i>this / that</i>	<i>who / what</i>
Determiner	<i>this / that</i>	<i>which / what</i>
Adverb	<i>here / there</i>	<i>where / when / why</i>

‘medial’, and *jêh* ‘distal’ function as independent pronouns (cf. 1a), determiners (cf. 1b), and locational adverbs (1c).²

- (1) Acehnese (Durie 1985:191, 268, 132)
- a. *Neu=peusom nyan bek ji=teu-peu lê=gop.*
2=hide that NEG 3=know-what by=other:person
‘Hide that so no one else will know.’
 - b. *Ureueng=nyan*
person=that
‘that person’
 - c. *Nyan ji=pura-pura teungeut jih.*
there 3=pretend-pretend sleep he
‘There he goes pretending to sleep.’

Similarly, in Awa Pit the interrogative *min* has all three functions: it may serve as an independent pronoun meaning ‘who’ (cf. 2a), it may function as a determiner meaning ‘which’ (cf. 2b), and it may refer to a location like English ‘where’ (cf. 2c). Note, however, that in the locational (i.e. adverbial) use *min* is always followed by an adposition.

- (2) Awa Pit (Curnow 1997:316, 319, 318)
- a. *M̄in=a pyan kwaytaw?*
who=ACC hit AUX
‘Who did you hit?’
 - b. *M̄in awa=ta pyan kwaytaw?*
which person=ACC hit AUX
‘Which person did you hit?’
 - c. *M̄in=ta=ma imtus?*
where=in=Q going
‘Where are you going?’

In addition to pronouns, determiners and adverbs, demonstratives and interrogatives may belong to several other word classes. There are, for instance, languages in which demonstratives and/or interrogatives function as verbs (cf. Dixon 1972:55; Terrill 1999:414), but such languages are uncommon. Cross-linguistically very frequent is the use of particular demonstratives and interrogatives in copular and nonverbal clauses. For instance, Tümpisa Shoshone uses case- and number-marked demonstratives as independent pronouns in verbal clauses (cf. 3a), whereas the demonstratives in nonverbal clauses are marked by the suffix *-sü(n)* in place of an inflectional ending (cf. 3b).

- (3) Tümpisa Shoshone (Dayley 1989: 141, 145)
- a. *U punikka (s)e-tü.*
it see this-NOM.SG
'This one saw it.'
 - b. *E-sü(n) nahim pungku.*
this-sün our:DU pet
'This is our pet.'

Similarly, in French the demonstratives in copular clauses are formally distinct from the pronominal demonstratives in other sentence types. While *celui* and *celle* occur in argument position of verbs and adpositions, *ce* is used only in copular clauses (cf. 4a-b).

- (4) French
- a. *Donne-moi ce livre-là et garde celui-ci pour toi.*
give-me this book-there and keep this:one-here for you
'Give me that book and keep this one for you.'
 - b. *C'est ma livre.*
That's my book
'That's my book.'

Like demonstratives, interrogatives have often special forms in copular and nonverbal clauses. For instance, in Tuvaluan the locational interrogative *fea* is uninflected when it occurs in verbal clauses, but when *fea* occurs in nonverbal clauses it carries a number marker (cf. 5a-b):

- (5) Tuvaluan (Besnier 2000: 428–9)
- a. *Koe e fano ki fea?*
you NPS go to where
'Where are you going?'
 - b. *Tou faasselu tee-fea?*
your comb SG-where
'Where is your comb?'

Similarly, in Lavukaleve the interrogative *ria* 'where' is used to ask for locational information in verbal questions, whereas *vasia* 'where:be' appears in nonverbal clauses. Since *vasia* has some verbal properties (e.g. it takes verbal agreement markers), it can be seen as an intransitive verb (cf. Terrill 1999: 414) (cf. 6a-b).

- (6) Lavukaleve (Terrill 1999: 415, 413)
- a. *Le inu ria ngoa mem inu? lore.*
but you where stay HAB:SG:M you 3:DU:say
'But where do you live? the two say.'

- b. *Le mola hoiga omalav vasia-v? hini fi marere ke.*
 but canoe DEM POSS:people be:where-PL INT FOC 3:PL:say EMPH
 ‘But where are the people from that canoe? they say.’

Like Tümpisa Shoshone, French, Tuvaluan and Lavukaleve, many other languages employ particular demonstratives and interrogatives in copular and nonverbal clauses. If we consider these forms a special category, demonstratives and interrogatives can be divided into four major classes: (1) demonstrative and interrogative pronouns, (2) demonstrative and interrogative determiners, (3) demonstrative and interrogative adverbs, and (4) demonstratives and interrogatives in copular and nonverbal clauses.

2.2 Semantic features

Turning to the meaning of demonstratives and interrogatives, we find that both types of expressions are commonly marked for the following semantic features: person, thing, place, direction, time, manner, and amount. These features are essentially identical to the ontological categories that Jackendoff (1983) proposed as primitives of conceptual structure. A few examples from English, Punjabi,

Table 2. Demonstratives and interrogatives in English

	Demonstratives	Interrogatives
Person	<i>that (one)</i>	<i>who</i>
Thing	<i>that (one)</i>	<i>what</i>
Place	<i>there</i>	<i>where</i>
Direction:to	<i>thither</i>	<i>whither</i>
Direction:from	<i>thence</i>	<i>whence</i>
Time	<i>then</i>	<i>when</i>
Manner	<i>thus (that way)</i>	<i>how</i>

Table 3. Demonstratives and interrogatives in Punjabi (Bhatia 1993:233)

	Demonstratives	Interrogatives
Person	<i>é</i>	<i>kauN</i>
Thing	<i>é</i>	<i>kii</i>
Place	<i>étthe</i>	<i>kítthe</i>
Direction	<i>éddar</i>	<i>kíddar</i>
Time	<i>huN</i>	<i>kad</i>
Manner	<i>évě</i>	<i>kivě</i>
Amount	<i>énnaa</i>	<i>kínmaa</i>

Lezgian, Japanese, and Malayalam are given in Tables 2 to 6.

All of the languages included in the sample employ demonstratives and interrogatives that encode at least some of these features. There are, however, languages in which the range of ontological features is fairly limited. An extreme case is furnished by Asheninka (cf. Givón 1990: 797–8). In Asheninka, content questions include the invariant question word *tsika* and the interrogative suffix *-ka* (which is also used in yes-no questions).

- (7) Asheninka (Givón 1990: 797–8)
- a. *Tsika i-tim-i-ka iri-Nta?*
 WH 3:M-be-REAL-Q he-there
 ‘Who is he (that one)?’
 - b. *Tsika o-saik-i-ka?*
 WH 3:F-sit-REAL-Q
 ‘Where is she?’
 - c. *Tsika i-kara-t-i-ka iri-ka?*
 WH 3:M-be:PL-&-REAL-Q 3:M-here
 ‘How much is it? / How many are there?’
 - d. *Tsika p-ira-aNt-i-ka?*
 WH 2-CRY-PURP-REAL-Q
 ‘Why are you crying?’
 - e. *Tsika i-kaNt-ai-t-i-ro-ka* ‘choclo?’
 WH 3:M-say-PASS-&-REAL-3:F-Q ‘corn’
 ‘How do you say ‘corn’ (in your language)?’

As can be seen from the examples in (7a–e), *tsika* occurs in a wide variety of content questions, asking for information concerning different ontological categories (e.g. person, place, amount, cause, and manner). In some cases the meaning is determined by the personal prefixes or oblique case-markers on the verb, but in most instances the precise interpretation of *tsika* can only be inferred from the context (cf. Givón 1990: 797–8). In contrast to Asheninka, all languages included in my sample have several question words: almost all languages employ interrogatives marked for person, thing and place, most languages have in addition two other question words marked for time and manner, and some languages use particular question words marked for direction and amount (though the two latter are often expressed by combining a locational or manner interrogative with an adposition or adverb; cf. Engl. *how much*).

Note that the distinction between the features person and thing is much more common in interrogatives than in demonstratives. Only a minority of

Table 4. Demonstratives and interrogatives in Lezgian (Haspelmath 1993: 188)

	Demonstratives	Interrogatives
Person/Thing	<i>im</i>	<i>him / wuž</i>
Place	<i>inag</i>	<i>hinag</i>
Place:at	<i>ina</i>	<i>hina</i>
Place:on	<i>inal</i>	<i>hinal</i>
Place:in	<i>inra</i>	<i>hinra</i>
Direction:to	<i>iniz</i>	<i>hiniz</i>
Direction:from	<i>inaj</i>	<i>hinaj</i>
Manner	<i>ikʹ</i>	<i>hikʹ (a)</i>
Amount	<i>iqʹwan</i>	<i>hiqʹwan</i>
Quality	<i>ižtin</i>	<i>hižtin</i>

Table 5. Demonstratives and interrogatives in Japanese (Hinds 1986: 266, 270)

	Demonstratives	Interrogatives
Person	–	<i>dare</i>
Thing	<i>kore</i>	<i>dore</i>
Place	<i>koko</i>	<i>doko</i>
Direction	<i>kochira</i>	<i>dochira</i>
Manner	<i>koo</i>	<i>doo</i>
Amount	<i>konna ni</i>	<i>donna ni</i>

Table 6. Demonstratives and interrogatives in Malayalam (Asher and Kumari 1997: 268)

	Demonstratives	Interrogatives
Person	<i>ii</i>	<i>evan / aara</i>
Thing	<i>ii</i>	<i>entə</i>
Place	<i>iviṭe</i>	<i>eviṭe</i>
Direction:to	<i>innə</i>	<i>ennə</i>
Time	<i>ippool</i>	<i>eppool</i>
Manner	<i>iṅṅine</i>	<i>eṅṅine</i>
Amount	<i>itra</i>	<i>etra</i>

languages included in the sample employs demonstratives that differentiate between persons and things (or animates and inanimates): Burushaski, Yidiñ, Nunggubuyu, Canela-Krahô, Barasano, Chemehuevi, Ute, Koromfe, Tamil, Korean, Desano, Cubeo, Wambaya, Yagua, and possibly a few others. In the vast majority of languages, the same demonstratives refer to both persons and things, or they are exclusively used with reference to inanimates (or things). In

particular, the use of demonstrative pronouns is often restricted in this regard. For instance, while the demonstrative determiners in Semelai may refer to both animates and inanimates, the demonstrative pronouns are exclusively used with reference to inanimates (unless they occur in nonverbal clauses; Kruspe 1999: 309). Similar restrictions have been noted for demonstrative pronouns in English, Chinese, Tagalog, and Indonesian (cf. Himmelmann 1996: 214).

In contrast to demonstratives, interrogatives are almost always marked for humanness; there are only two languages in the entire sample that do not mark the distinction between persons and things, Khasi and Latvian (cf. Ultan 1978; Nau 1998). Apart from humanness, the other ontological categories mentioned above are commonly expressed by both demonstratives and interrogatives. In addition, interrogatives sometimes encode the features cause, size, type, and degree, and they frequently express a pragmatic feature that one might call selective reference (Nau 1998; see also Givón 1990: 794–6). Selective interrogatives indicate that the hearer has to choose the referent from a contextually determined set. For instance, English *which* is a selective question word because it “implies that the choice is made from a limited number of alternatives” (Quirk et al. 1985: 369).

While demonstratives are only rarely marked for humanness and selective reference, they almost always carry a deictic feature. All languages included in the sample have at least two demonstratives that indicate the relative distance of the referent to the deictic center (cf. Diessel forthcoming b). Interrogatives are usually unmarked in this regard; that is, interrogatives do not carry a deictic distance feature. A notable exception is Amele, in which the locational interrogatives *ai* ‘where’ and *ana* ‘where’ differentiate between proximal and distal referents: *ai* indicates that the unknown location is expected to be proximal and within sight (from the perspective of the speaker, i.e. the deictic center), whereas *ana* indicates that the unknown location is expected to be distal and possibly out of sight (Roberts 1987: 21).

In sum, while demonstratives and interrogatives differ with regard to the features humanness, selective reference and deictic contrast, they are strikingly similar in that they encode the same ontological features: person/thing, place, direction, time, manner, and amount.

2.3 Morphological features

In addition to syntactic and semantic features, demonstratives and interrogatives often share some of their morphological features. There are, for instance, many

languages in which adverbial demonstratives and interrogatives include the same derivational morphemes. As can be seen in Table 7, in Bāgandji adverbial demonstratives and interrogatives are formed by adding one of three locational suffixes to the base forms (*-ra* ‘place’, *-maṛi* ‘direction:to’, and *-ndu* ‘direction:form’). What makes these examples especially interesting in the context of the current investigation is that the locational suffixes do not occur with any other lexemes; that is, their occurrence is limited to adverbial demonstratives and interrogatives.

Like Bāgandji, many other languages employ the same locational markers to form adverbial demonstratives and interrogatives. Very often, the locational markers are case affixes or adpositions. Consider for instance the examples in Table 8 from Chukchi.

Like Chukchi nouns, Chukchi demonstratives and interrogatives occur with six different locational case markers: locative, allative, ablative, inessive, perlativ, and orientative (note that inessive, perlativ, and orientative case are homophonous in the interrogatives). Interestingly, some of the locational suffixes that occur with demonstratives and interrogatives are morphologically distinct from the corresponding case markers on nouns; in fact, the allative and ablative forms are completely unrelated. This suggests that the locational demonstratives and interrogatives are not simply derived by adding the regular case endings to the base forms; rather, they constitute a particular paradigm distinct from the inflectional paradigm of Chukchi nouns.

The same holds true for some of the locational demonstratives and interrogatives in German. As can be seen in Table 9, German has a series of pronominal adverbs consisting of a demonstrative or interrogative and a locational adposition or direction marker. Although these forms appear to be morphologically transparent, they are highly lexicalized: they include an old oblique form of the demonstratives or interrogatives that is no longer used in Modern German (*dar*, *wor*), and their meanings are not entirely predictable from their components (cf. Diessel 1999: 75–78). Similar to the locational demonstratives

Table 7. Locational demonstratives and interrogatives in Bāgandji (Hercus 1982: 173)

	Demonstratives (‘this’)	Interrogatives (‘which’)
Base	(g) <i>īgi</i>	<i>windja</i>
Place (<i>-ra</i>)	(g) <i>īda-ra</i>	<i>windja-ra</i>
Direction:to (<i>-maṛi</i>)	(g) <i>īda-maṛi</i>	<i>windja-maṛi</i>
Direction:from (<i>-ndu</i>)	(g) <i>īda-ndu</i>	<i>windja-ndu</i>

Table 8. Locational demonstratives and interrogatives in Chukchi (Dunn 1999: 286–7)

	Demonstratives ('this/here')	Interrogatives ('where')
Locative (<i>-ku, -kə</i>)	<i>ɲut-ku</i>	<i>miŋ-kə</i>
Allative (<i>-kəri</i>)	<i>ɲut-kəri</i>	<i>miŋ-kəri</i>
Ablative (<i>-qo(rə)</i>)	<i>ɲot-qo(rə)</i>	<i>meŋ-qo(rə)</i>
Inessive (<i>-cəku</i>)	<i>ɲut-ke-cəku</i>	<i>miŋ-ke-te</i>
Perlative (<i>-te</i>)	<i>ɲut-ke-te</i>	<i>miŋ-ke-te</i>
Orientative (<i>-ɲjit</i>)	<i>ɲut-ke-ɲjit</i>	<i>miŋ-ke-te</i>

and interrogatives in Chukchi, the German demonstratives and interrogatives shown in Table 9 constitute a special morphological paradigm.

Like locational demonstratives and interrogatives, manner demonstratives and interrogatives are frequently derived from the same lexemes. For instance, in Tümpisa Shoshone manner demonstratives are formed by adding the suffix *-(n)ni* to one of the demonstrative roots. Apart from demonstratives, *-(n)ni* only occurs with question words. Specifically, it attaches to the interrogative *haka* 'what' to derive a manner interrogative meaning 'how'. In addition to *-(n)ni*, there is another affix in Tümpisa Shoshone that is exclusively used with demonstratives and interrogatives, the suffix *-ittün*, which indicates a special kind.

Similar to adverbial demonstratives and interrogatives, pronominal demonstratives and interrogatives may include the same morphemes. An especially interesting case is furnished by Korean. Strictly speaking, Korean does not have pronominal demonstratives. The semantic equivalent of a demonstrative pronoun in English is a noun phrase consisting of a demonstrative particle (*i* 'near speaker', *ku* 'near hearer', or *ce* 'away from speaker and hearer') and a "defective noun" (e.g. *pwun* or *i* 'person', *kes* 'thing', *ki* 'place', *ttay* 'time'), which indicates the type of referent (Sohn 1994: 294). Interestingly, some of the Korean interrogatives are formed in the same way. They consist of an interrogative particle (*enu* or *etten*) and the same defective nouns that are involved in the formation of demonstrative pronouns. Table 10 shows some of these forms.

Finally, demonstratives and interrogatives share an important prosodic feature: both usually carry stress accent.

2.4 Summary and discussion

To summarize, we have seen that demonstratives and interrogatives have some striking features in common:

Table 9. Locational demonstratives and interrogatives in German

Source	Demonstratives ('there')	Interrogatives ('where')
DEM/WH:OBL-above	<i>darüber</i>	<i>worüber</i>
DEM/WH:OBL-in	<i>darin</i>	<i>worin</i>
DEM/WH:OBL-on:top:of	<i>darauf</i>	<i>worüber</i>
DEM/WH:OBL-to	<i>dazu</i>	<i>wozu</i>
DEM/WH:OBL-by	<i>dabei</i>	<i>wobei</i>
DEM/WH:OBL-thither	<i>dahin</i>	<i>wohin</i>
DEM/WH:OBL-thence	<i>daher</i>	<i>woher</i>
DEM/WH:OBL-with	<i>damit</i>	<i>womit</i>

Table 10. Demonstratives and interrogatives in Korean (Sohn 1996: 294–6)

	Demonstratives		Interrogatives	
Person	<i>i pwun</i>	'this (one)'	<i>enu pwun</i>	'who'
Person	<i>i i</i>	'this (one)'	<i>enu i</i>	'who'
Thing	<i>i kes</i>	'this (one)'	<i>enu kes</i>	'what / which'
Place	<i>i ki</i>	'here'	<i>enu ki</i>	'where'
Time	<i>i ttay</i>	'now'	<i>enu ttay</i>	'when'

- They cross-cut the boundaries of several word classes.
- They encode the same ontological categories.
- They often include the same derivational morphemes.
- They usually carry stress accent.

Let us now ask why demonstratives and interrogatives share all these features. In particular, let us ask why they tend to encode the same semantic features, which is probably the most conspicuous property they have in common.

I suggest that the semantic similarities between demonstratives and interrogatives are motivated by similar pragmatic functions. Both types of expressions are directives. They focus the hearer's attention on entities that previously were not activated. This explains why demonstratives and interrogatives carry stress accent.

Demonstratives are commonly used to focus the hearer's attention on elements in the surrounding situation. That is at least their basic use. They may also refer to discourse participants and propositions, but, as I have argued elsewhere, such endophoric uses are extensions of the deictic use (cf. Diessel 1999: chap 5; see also Brugmann 1904; Bühler 1934; and Lyons 1977). In the deictic use, demonstratives can be seen as signals that instruct the hearer to search for a specific element in the surrounding situation. In order to identify the referent, the hearer can draw on information from several sources: (1) perceptual

information from the surrounding situation, (2) contextual information from the ongoing discourse, and (3) semantic information provided by the demonstrative. In other words, the ontological features that are commonly encoded in demonstratives provide information that together with the information from the surrounding situation and the ongoing discourse helps the hearer to identify the entity on which the speaker seeks to focus his or her attention.

Interrogatives serve similar pragmatic functions. Like demonstratives, they can be seen as signals that instruct the hearer to search for a specific referent. However, in this case the referent is not necessarily an element of the surrounding situation but rather a conceptual unit that is already in the hearer's knowledge store. The speaker only poses a question, if s/he assumes that the hearer is able to provide the missing piece of information from his/her knowledge. However, in order to activate the piece of information that is requested by the speaker, the hearer needs some information to find the proper element in his/her knowledge store. This information is provided by two sources: (1) the discourse context (including the propositional content of the question), and (2) the semantic feature of the interrogative, which indicates the ontological status of the referent. Perceptual information is only relevant if the question concerns a specific aspect of the speech situation, i.e. if the speaker asks the hearer about a person, thing, or place in the surrounding situation.

Thus, both demonstratives and interrogatives initiate a search for information that is guided by their semantic features. This explains why the two types of expressions are semantically so similar. They encode a small number of ontological categories that indicate the type of referent and thereby restrict the search domain. Further, it explains why demonstratives and interrogatives also share some of their morphosyntactic features. As argued by Croft (1991) and others, the syntactic functions of words are closely related to their meanings: words denoting a place, direction, time, or manner are commonly expressed by adverbs, whereas words referring to persons and things are usually expressed by pronouns or noun phrases. Since demonstratives and interrogatives denote a wide variety of different types of referents, they cross-cut the boundaries of several word classes and carry the same morphosyntactic features.

3. Are demonstratives and interrogatives grammatical markers?

Concluding this paper, let us consider the relationship of demonstratives and interrogatives to other closed class items and their general status in language. In

functional linguistics, words and morphemes are commonly divided into two general types: lexical expressions and grammatical markers. Lexical expressions subsume the major word classes — nouns, verbs and adjectives — while grammatical markers comprise elements such as prepositions, conjunctions and auxiliaries. The division between lexical expressions and grammatical markers is based on two major criteria: first, lexical expressions and grammatical markers serve different functions. Lexical expressions are symbolic units that denote referents, activities and other concepts, whereas grammatical markers are structural (or topographic) expressions that organize the information flow in the ongoing discourse (Talmy 1988). Second, lexical expressions and grammatical markers differ in terms of class size. Lexical expressions are open class (except for adjectives, which may be open or closed class; cf. Dixon 1982) while grammatical markers are always closed class items (cf. Talmy 1988). Since demonstratives and interrogatives are closed class items that are often used with language-internal functions, they are commonly considered grammatical markers. However, in their basic uses, demonstratives and interrogatives do not serve an ordinary grammatical function. Grammatical markers either indicate relationships between elements of the ongoing discourse (e.g. prepositions) or they qualify the meaning of a content word (e.g. auxiliaries). Demonstratives and interrogatives, on the other hand, are concerned with the communicative interaction between speaker and hearer. In their basic uses, they focus the hearer's attention on new elements, either in the surrounding situation or in the hearer's knowledge store. This function is crucially distinct from the language-organizing function of most other closed class items. Of course, both demonstratives and interrogatives are also used with language-internal functions: anaphorically used demonstratives, for instance, refer to elements of the ongoing discourse, and interrogatives introducing relative clauses or indirect questions mark particular grammatical constructions; but as many scholars have argued these uses are derivative of their uses as deictics and question words (see Brugmann 1904; Bühler 1934; Lyons 1977). In fact, in my view demonstratives and interrogatives used with language-internal functions represent the first stage of the grammaticalization process whereby these expressions develop into third person pronouns, relative pronouns and other grammatical markers (see Diessel 1999: chap 5). Thus, while demonstratives and interrogatives may assume a grammatical function in the process of grammaticalization, in their basic uses they are crucially distinct from genuine grammatical markers.

What is more, while grammatical markers are commonly derived from lexical expressions, demonstratives and interrogatives cannot be traced back to

lexical items. Both types of expressions are generally so old that their roots are not etymologically analyzable (cf. Brugmann 1904; Traugott 1982; Hopper 1991; Lehmann 1995; Himmelmann 1997; Haspelmath 1997; Diessel 1999). For instance, in Indo-European languages demonstratives developed from deictic roots that were already part of the demonstratives in the oldest records (**to-*, **so-*, **o-*, **i-*) (cf. Brugmann 1904), and most interrogatives evolved from the reconstructed question words **kwi-s* 'who' and **kwi-d* 'what' in the protolanguage (cf. Lehmann 1995). Both demonstratives and interrogatives are often reinforced by other lexemes such as *ecce* 'behold' in Vulgar Latin (Latin *ille* DEM > Vulgar Latin *ecce ille* > Old French *cest cel* > French *ce*; Harris 1978:70–78) or *cosa* 'thing' in Modern Italian (*che* WH > *che cosa* > *cosa*; Lehmann 1995:50), but in contrast to other cases of grammaticalization, reinforcement does not give rise to a new type of grammatical marker. Even if the reinforcing element becomes part of the demonstrative or interrogative and if the original demonstrative/-interrogative later disappears, the development does not create a new type of grammatical marker. In the end, the reinforcing element just continues the function of an old form. Thus, unlike most other closed class items, demonstratives and interrogatives are not really diachronic innovations. There is at least no evidence from any language that demonstratives and interrogatives developed from a lexical source or any other source for that matter that did not involve a genuine demonstrative or interrogative. It seems that demonstratives and interrogatives emerged very early in the evolution of language so that we simply do not know how they evolved.

All this suggests that demonstratives and interrogatives are crucially distinct from other grammatical markers and have a special status in language. I suggest therefore that the traditional dichotomy between lexical expressions and grammatical markers be modified. Demonstratives and interrogatives do not fit well into this model. They constitute a special class of linguistic expressions that should be kept separate from genuine grammatical markers. This class of expressions emerged very early in the evolution of language and is now part of the basic vocabulary of every language.

Notes

1. First and second person pronouns have other historical sources (cf. Lehmann 1995:39–42).

2. Abbreviations: 1/2/3 = first/second/third person, ACC = accusative, AUX = auxiliary, DEM = demonstrative, EMPH = emphasis, F = feminine, FOC = focus, HAB = habitual, INT = intention particle, M = masculine, N = neuter, NEG = negation, NOM = nominative, NPS = non-past tense, OBV = obviative marker, PASS = passive, PL = plural, PURP = purposive, Q = question marker, SG = singular, REAL = realis, WH = question word.

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Languages

Acehnese (Austronesian), Ainu (Isolate), Alambak (Sepik), Alyawarra (Pama-Nyungan), Amele (Trans New Guinea), Anywa (Nilo-Saharan), Awa Pit (Barbacoan), Babungo (Niger Congo), Bāgandji (Pama-Nyungan), Barasano (Tucanoan), Basque (Isolate), Burushaski (Isolate), Canela-Krahô (Ge-Kaingang), Cantonese (Sinitic), Cubeo (Tucanoan), Chamorro (Austronesian), Chemehuevi (Uto-Aztecan), Chalcatongo Mixtec (Otomanguan), Chukchi (Chukchi-Kamchatkan), Cree (Algonquian), Desano (Tucanoan), Dholuo (Nilo-Saharan), Dong (Daic), Djaru (Pama-Nyungan), Dyirbal (Pama-Nyungan), Egyptian Arabic (Semitic), English (Indo-European), Fijian (Austronesian), Finnish (Uralic), French (Indo-European), Georgian (Kartvelian), German (Indo-European), Greek (Indo-European), Hatam (Trans New Guinea), Hausa (Chadic), Hdi (Chadic), Hixkaryana (Carib), Hua (East New Guinea Highlands), Hungarian (Uralic), Hunzib (Dagastan), Japanese (Isolate), Jamul Tiipa (Yuman), Kabardian (Northwestern Caucasian), Karanga (Niger Congo), Kashmiri (Indo-European), Khasi (Austroasiatic), Korean (Isolate), Koyra Chiini (Songhay), Koromfe (Niger Congo), Kusaiean (Austronesian), Lakota (Sioux), Latvian (Indo-European), Lavukaleve (East Papuan), Lezgian (Dagastan), Limbu (Tibeto-Burman), Malayalam (Dravidian), Maltese (Semitic), Manam (Austronesian), Maori (Austronesian), Mparntwe Arrernte (Pama-Nyungan), Maybrat (Trans New Guinea), Meithei (Tibeto-Burman), Nabak (Trans New Guinea), Nama (Khoisan), Ngiti (Nilo-Saharan), Nkore-Kiga (Niger Congo), Ndyuka (Pidgin), Nunggubuyu (Isolate), Miya (Chadic), Oneida (Iroquoian), Paumari (Arawakan), Persian (Indo-European), Pirahã (Mura), Polish (Indo-European), Ponapean (Austronesian), Punjabi (Indo-European), Quileute (Chimakuan), Rapanui (Austronesian), Sanuma (Chibchan), Semelai (Austroasiatic), Slave (Athapaskan), Somali (Chushitic), Supyire (Niger Congo), Tamil (Dravidian), Tanacross (Athapaskan), Trumai (Isolate), Tümpisa Shoshone (Uto-Aztecan), Turkish (Turkic), Tuvaluan (Austronesian), Tzutujil (Mayan), Udihe (Tungusic), Ute (Uto-Aztecan), Wambaya (West Barkley), Wardaman (Pama-Nyungan), Warekena (Arawakan), West Greenlandic (Eskimo), Yagua (Peba-Yaguan), Yidjn (Pama-Nyungan), Vietnamese (Austroasiatic), Yimas (Nor-Pondo)

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