

Seminar in Semantics: Complex Demonstratives

G61.3340-001

Spring 2004

Convenor: Paul Elbourne

1 Housekeeping

Timing: Tuesdays 9:30am – 12:15pm
Room: Conference room, Linguistics Department (719 Broadway, 4th floor)
Credits: 4 points
Prerequisites: A previous graduate course in semantics or the philosophy of language

2 Subject Matter

This seminar will investigate the semantics of complex demonstratives, that is phrases like *that dog with a blue collar* and *this table* where *this* or *that* is followed by an NP. There has been much debate recently on the overall semantic shape of these items, with some theorists (e.g. Braun) claiming that they are directly referential in the sense of Kaplan, some (e.g. King) claiming that they are quantificational, some (e.g. Roberts) claiming that they are to be treated as definites in a dynamic semantics, and some (e.g. Elbourne) claiming that *this* and *that* are basically Fregean definite articles. Some of the discussion will involve presupposition and possible worlds semantics: does a sentence of the form *That F is G* (with speaker demonstration) express a proposition if the object demonstrated is not *F*? and does the object demonstrated have to be *F* at an arbitrary world *w* in order for the proposition expressed by such a sentence to be true at *w*? Attention will also be paid to the nature of the proximal and distal features on *this* and *that* and their translation equivalents in other languages.

3 Requirements for Registered Students

1. A class presentation lasting approximately 75 minutes on one of the articles we will be discussing, in which the main points of the article should be summarized and evaluated.
2. A class presentation on the subject of the term paper.
3. A term paper, to be handed in on Friday May 7th.

4 Provisional Syllabus

JANUARY	Tue 20	Introduction, planning King 2001, chapter 5
	Tue 27	Kaplan 1989a
FEBRUARY	Tue 3	Taylor 1980
	Tue 10	Davies 1982 Neale 1993
	Tue 17	Richard 1993 Braun 1994
	Tue 24	Lepore and Ludwig 2000
MARCH	Tue 2	Borg 2000 Glanzberg and Siegel 2003
	Tue 9	King 2001, chapters 1 and 2 Johnson and Lepore 2002
	Tue 16	SPRING RECESS
	Tue 23	King 2001, chapters 3 and 4
	Tue 30	Roberts forthcoming (plus background on dynamic semantics)
APRIL	Tue 6	Buchanan 2002 Elbourne 2004 (plus Heim 1991)
	Tue 13	Distal and proximal features (literature TBA)
	Tue 20	Indefinite <i>this</i> (literature TBA)
	Tue 27	Student presentations on their papers

Bibliography

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- Borg, Emma. 2000. Complex demonstratives. *Philosophical Studies* 97: 229–249.
- Buchanan, Ray. 2002. Understanding complex demonstratives. Ms., NYU.
- Davies, Martin. 1982. Individuation and the semantics of demonstratives. *Journal of Philosophical Logic* 11: 287–310.
- Elbourne, Paul. Fregean demonstrative determiners. Ms., NYU.
- von Fintel, Kai. Forthcoming. Would you believe it? The King of France is back! (Presuppositions and truth-value intuitions.) To appear in Anne Bezuidenhout and Marga Reimer, eds., *Descriptions and beyond: an interdisciplinary collection of essays on definite and indefinite descriptions and other related phenomena*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Glanzberg, Michael, and Susanna Siegel. 2003. Presupposition and policing in complex demonstratives. Ms., MIT and Harvard University.
- Heim, Irene. 1991. Artikel und Definitheit. In Arnim von Stechow and Dieter Wunderlich, eds., *Semantik. Ein internationales Handbuch der zeitgenössischen Forschung*, 487–535. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Johnson and Lepore. 2002. Does syntax reveal semantics? A case study of complex demonstratives. In *Philosophical Perspectives 16: Language and mind*, pp. 17–41.

- Kaplan, David. 1989a. Demonstratives. In Joseph Almog, John Perry, and Howard Wettstein, eds., *Themes from Kaplan*, 481–563. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kaplan, David. 1989b. Afterthoughts. In Joseph Almog, John Perry, and Howard Wettstein, eds., *Themes from Kaplan*, 565–614. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- King, Jeffrey. 2001. *Complex demonstratives. A quantificational account*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Lepore, Ernest, and Kirk Ludwig. 2000. The semantics and pragmatics of complex demonstratives. *Mind* 109: 199–240.
- Neale, Stephen. 1993. Term limits. In J. Tomberlin, ed., *Philosophical Perspectives 7: Logic and language*, pp. 89–123. Atascadero, California: Ridgeview Publishing.
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- Roberts, Craig. Forthcoming. Demonstratives as definites. Ms., Ohio State University.
- Taylor, Barry. 1980. Truth-theory for indexical languages. In Mark Platts, ed., *Reference, truth and reality*, pp. 182–198. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.