WEAK DEMONSTRATIVES, ARE THERE ANY? A PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF BRAZILIAN PORTUGUESE DATA

Renato Miguel BASSO
Universidade Federal de São Carlos (UFSCAR)
Diego Rafael VOGT
Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC)- Pós-Graduação

RESUMO

Neste artigo, analisamos a possibilidade de haver interpretações fracas com descrições demonstrativas. Olhando para os dados do português brasileiro, a resposta parece ser negativa. Para saber a razão para tanto, é necessário adotarmos uma teoria sobre definidos fracos. Neste trabalho, adotamos a teoria de Aguilar-Guevara & Zwarts (2010), que propõe que a interpretação fraca envolve referência a espécies. Adotamos também uma teoria sobre demonstrativos segundo a qual eles são um tipo de descrição definida com pressuposições específicas. Com essas teorias, é possível explicar as razões para não termos normalmente uma interpretação fraca com descrições demonstrativas, também é possível encontrar um tipo particular de contexto no qual de fato é possível encontrar interpretações fracas com descrições demonstrativas.

ABSTRACT

In this paper, we analyze the possibility of attributing weak interpretations to demonstrative descriptions. When we consider data from Brazilian Portuguese, our first impression is that it is impossible. To know the reasons for this constraint it is necessary to have a theory of weak definites. In this paper, we adopt Aguilar-Guevara & Zwarts (2010)'s theory, which states that the weak interpretation involves reference to kinds. We also adopt a theory of demonstratives which claims that they are in fact a kind of definite description with specific presuppositions. With this theoretical background we can explain why it is normally impossible to have weak interpretations with demonstrative descriptions and we can also find a particular type of context which allows for weak interpretations of demonstrative descriptions.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Descrições definidas. Definidos fracos. Descrições demonstrativas. Referência a kinds. Semântica de situação.

KEY WORDS

Definite descriptions. Weak definites. Demonstrative descriptions. Kind reference. Situation semantics.

Introduction: weak definites and their properties

The phenomenon of weak definites has attracted the attention of linguists mainly because it poses serious challenges to one of the most well established consensus about the semantics (and use) of definite articles: the uniqueness (either as an assertion or as a presupposition) associated with it. Examples such as (1) and (2), below do not seem to require, at least in Brazilian Portuguese (BrP), a unique referent; they also convey "enriched meanings" – the two most distinguished features of weak definites (cf. Aguilar-Guevara & Zwarts, 2010; Vogel, 2011, among others):

(1)   Pra chegar até   aqui, você tem que pegar o ônibus.
      To   arrive until here you have to take   the bus.
      'To get here, you must take the bus.'

(2)   Bom, gente, agora vou   sair, vou   no   mercado (i.e., do shopping)
      Well guys now will_{first-person} leave go_{firstperson} in+the market
      'Well guys, I'm leaving now, I'm going to the market.'

In short, it is possible to find in the literature the following properties associated with weak definites, all of them exemplified by the example in (3) below:

a) (apparent) violation of the uniqueness presupposition

b) enriched meaning

c) sloppy identity in elliptical contexts

d) narrow scope

e) lexical restriction

f) compatibility only with modifiers that establish (or result in) subtypes of the nouns they modify

(3) João foi para o hospital.
     'John went to the hospital'

a) (apparent) violation of the uniqueness presupposition → the identity of the hospital is irrelevant, and (3) can be used in a context in which the participants know that there is more than one (salient) hospital.

b) enriched meaning → John went to the hospital to be treated, for healing, or because he works there...

c) sloppy identity in elliptical contexts → John went to the hospital and Mary did too (possibly to different hospitals)

d) narrow scope → Every student was sent to the hospital (distributive interpretation; i.e., the students were sent to different hospitals)

e) lexically restricted → John went to the clinic. – no weak interpretation

f) accepts only modifiers that establish subtypes (or subkinds) of the nouns they modify

→ John went to the mental hospital –weak interpretation is possible
→ John went to the old hospital – no weak interpretation

Although a lot of work has been devoted to the weak definite article, analyzing this phenomenon either as a type of kind-reference (Aguilar-Guevara & Zwarts, 2010) or as a type of semantic incorporation (Carlson *et alii* 2006; Bosch 2010), no attention has been devoted to the other sort of determiner which has a definite interpretation, namely demonstratives.

As we'll see in the following sections (mainly in section 2), although there are some controversies about the semantic of demonstratives, we'll argue that demonstratives and definite descriptions form a class; our evidence is examples such as[1]:

Uses of the demonstrative

deictic uses	anaphoric uses	descriptive uses (i.e., non-deictic, non-anaphoric)
(a) The cat is sleeping (pointing to a cat) (b) That cat is sleeping (pointing to a cat)	(c) A woman$_i$ walked in. The woman$_i$ was smiling (d) A woman$_i$ walked. That woman$_i$ smiled to another women	(e) The student who finish the exam may leave the room (f) That student who finish the exam may leave the room

Given that demonstratives and definite descriptions show similar uses and interpretations, it is reasonable to consider them as forming a unified class; the next step is to argue for a unified semantics for them, and this can only be done if we take each one as some sort of description and not as referential terms – that's why (among other reasons) we claim that demonstratives are a kind of definite description (cf. King, 2001; Roberts, 2002; Wolter, 2006; Elbourne, 2008, Basso, 2009). So our main question in this paper is: can demonstratives give

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[1] Cf. King, 2001; Roberts, 2002; Wolter, 2006; Basso, 2009, among many others.

rise to weak interpretations in the sense that the uniqueness in their use is not (apparently) required?

Based on the following examples, our first answer is 'no':

(4) Pra chegar até   aqui, você tem que pegar <u>esse/aquele ônibus</u>. (only one bus)
To arrive until here you have to take   <u>this / that   bus</u>
'To get here, you must take this/that bus.'

(5) Bom, gente, agora vou   sair, vou   <u>nesse/naquele</u> <u>mercado</u>. (only one store).
Well   guys now   will$_{1rst-person}$ leave go$_{1rst-person}$ in <u>this/that   store</u>
'Well guys, I'm leaving now, I'm going to this/that store.'

(6) Maria leu <u>esse/aquele jornal</u>. (only one newspaper)
Maria read$_{past}$ <u>this/that newspaper</u>
'Maria read this/that newspaper.'

(7) João foi pra esse/aquele médico (only one doctor)
João go$_{past}$ to this/that doctor.
'João went to this/that doctor.'

The examples from (4) to (7) have only a strong interpretation (i.e., they refer to specific individuals or entities) and show none of the other properties related to weak interpretations:

(8) João foi pra esse/aquele hospital.
João go$_{past}$ to this/that hospital
'John went to this/that   hospital.'

a) no (apparent) violation of the uniqueness presupposition →
    there is only one (specific) hospital

b) no enriched meaning ➔ ??? to be treated, for healing...

c) no sloppy identity in elliptical contexts ➔ ... and Mary did too (same hospital)

d) absence of narrow scope interpretation ➔ Every student was sent to this/that hospital (no distributive interpretation)

e) lexically restricted ➔ doesn't apply

f) accepts only adjectives that establish subtypes of the nouns they ➔ doesn't apply

Considering the similarities between definites and demonstratives, why can't demonstrative descriptions have weak interpretations in the same way that definite descriptions can? Is there any kind of context in which demonstrative descriptions have a weak interpretation? The answers to these questions can improve our understanding of the semantics of demonstratives and also of the phenomenon of weak definite. But before we answer these questions we need to have a theory about weak definites as well as a theory about demonstrative descriptions.

In this paper we adopt Aguilar-Guevara & Zwarts (2010)'s theory for weak definites (section 1) and we treat demonstrative descriptions as a type of definite description, which have specific presuppositions associated with them, as proposed by Wolter (2006) (section 2). Our next step will be to look at demonstrative reference to kinds (section 3). After presenting our theoretical assumptions, we'll go back to possible weak demonstratives in sections 4 and 5. In section 4 we explain why it seems impossible to normally have weak interpretations with demonstrative descriptions, and in section 5 we will present a specific context in which it is indeed possible to have weak interpretations with demonstrative descriptions and we will also show the reasons why. Our main conclusions are presented in section 6.

1 Aguilar-Guevara and Zwarts (2010)'s theory for weak definites

According to Aguilar-Guevara and Zwarts (2010)'s theory, weak definites maintain the uniqueness presupposition associated with definites although not with respect to particular concrete individuals but with respect to kinds.

Their analyses involve an instantiation or realization relation R, and a notion of stereotypical usage events U (which accounts for the enriched meaning associated with weak definites). These ideas can explain, in principle, the main properties of weak definites. Consider the following sentence:

(9)   John went to the hospital

According to their analyses we have:

(9') $\exists e[\text{go-to}(e) \wedge \text{Ag}(e) = \text{John} \wedge R(\text{Ref}(e); H) \wedge U(e; H)]$

As the formula in (9') shows, there is no quantification over 'hospitals' (H) but only an instantiation relation applied to the kind 'hospital' (R(Ref(e); H)), which is the goal (or theme) of the "going event"; and there is a set of usage (common, typical) events associated with hospital (U(e; H)), which involves healing or treatment events among others. The absence of quantification can account for the sloppy identity in anaphora as well as for the narrow scope reading. The usage events constraint can account for the lexical restrictions associated with weak readings and also for the fact that only modifiers which results in subkinds can maintain the weak interpretation (as claimed by the authors, usage events can be established only with kinds and/or subkinds).

There are of course more subtleties and further developments of this theory. Be it as it may, to our purposes in this paper, the two most important features of Aguilar-Guevara and Zwarts (2010)'s theory are: (a) the maintenance of the uniqueness associated with definite

descriptions and (b) the assumption that weak interpretations involve kinds and/or subkinds.

We have at last a theory which assumes uniqueness and appeals to kinds (and subkinds), in the next section we'll consider the semantics of demonstratives.

2   A semantic analyses for demonstrative descriptions

In principle, it is possible to have two different approaches for demonstrative descriptions[2]: (i) a direct reference approach, as proposed by Kaplan (1989), Braun (2008), Dever (2001), etc. (note that each author argues for a direct reference approach but their proposals are not the same); and (ii) indirect reference approach, in which the demonstrative can be treat as a quantifier (King, 2001) or as a determiner (Roberts, 2002; Elbourne, 2008; Wolter, 2006).

As expected, all of these approaches have their merits and problems. From a linguistic point of view, due, among others reasons, to syntactic and semantics arguments, demonstratives are more naturally treated as determiners (for counter-arguments to this, see, e.g., Dever, 2001), alongside with definite descriptions.

Thus, considering Roberts (2002)'s, Elbourne (2008)'s and Wolter (2006)'s proposals, we'll adopt the latter because it's more economical and covers a wider range of data[3].

2.1   Wolter (2006)'s proposal for demonstrative descriptions

According to Wolter's theory, definite and demonstrative descriptions share the same assertion content but differ with respect to

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[2] Demonstrative descriptions (also known as complex demonstratives) are expressions composed by a demonstrative and an NP (DEM + NP); this is the only kind of demonstrative constructions that we'll consider in this paper. There are some complicated and interesting issues in trying to extend our considerations to plural demonstrative descriptions and also to simple demonstratives (singular and/or plural).

[3] A thorough defense of Wolter (2006)'s proposal is not the aim of this paper.

their presuppositions. The only difference between these descriptions – leaving aside the distal/proximal properties showed by 'this' versus 'that'[4] – is that definite descriptions presuppose uniqueness with respect to a conversational situation or context; i.e., maximal or default situation, while demonstrative descriptions presuppose uniqueness with respect to a proper subpart of a conversational situation or context; i.e., not the maximal situation, but a non-default situation[5].

To illustrate this point, consider a scenario where there are two different paintings in an art gallery; in this context, (10) is bad even with a pointing gesture, and (11), with a pointing gesture, is good:

(10) # I like the painting[6].

(11) I like this painting.

In Wolter's theory the pointing gesture associated with demonstratives is used to establish a non-default situation. So, in the scenario above, when someone points to a single painting, a non-default situation is established in which there is only one painting (which is the one being pointed to). In this non-default situation, the use of a demonstrative description like 'this painting' is felicitous exactly because there is only

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[4] In BrP, 'esse/este' *versus* 'aquele'. We consider that in spoken BrP there is no more difference between 'esse' and 'este'.

[5] One of the reviewers of this paper said that: "It is really surprisingly that 'the' and 'that' have the same semantics, except for a 'non-default' requirement by the demonstrative pronoun. I intuitively expected that the demonstrative should presuppose "other elements in the set", what does not holds for the definite description". If what is meant by "other elements in the set" is that there can more than one element in the denotation of the NP composing the descriptions, then obviously the uniqueness with respect to a non-default situation entails that *there can be* "other elements in the set" – the examples in (10) and (11) in the sequence show just that. It would also be wrong to assume that "there are other elements in the set" *is a presupposition* because we can use a demonstrative description in a context in which there is only one (relevant) object even in the maximal situation. Since the presupposition associated with the definite description acts in maximal situations, obviously there can't be "more than one element in the set" (i.e., which is in the denotation of the relevant NP) for a felicitous use of a definite description.

[6] Even if (10) is accepted in this context, there is a clear preference for using (11).

one painting in the non-default situation – this scenario satisfies the uniqueness presupposed by the demonstrative (which is the same as the presupposition associated with the definite, but which acts in the maximal situation in the case of definite descriptions).

These intuitions can be apprehended by the formulations below (Wolter's definitions (p. 64):

[[the$_n$]]: $\lambda P.P(s_n)$ is a singleton set.
If defined, denotes $\iota x.P(x)(s_n)$
[[that$_n$]]: $\lambda P.P(s_n)$ is a singleton set and s_n is non-default.
If defined, denotes $\iota x.P(x)(s_n)$

Wolter's theory is naturally extended to deal with non-referential uses of demonstratives, as anaphoric and descriptive uses.

Our next step is to understand the relation between demonstratives and kind reference, considering that, in accordance with Aguilar-Guevara and Zwarts (2010)'s theory, reference to kinds (or subkinds) is necessary in order to have weak interpretations.

3 Another piece of evidence: demonstrative reference to kinds

Demonstrative descriptions cannot normally be used to refer to kinds, as the example (12) shows, but it's natural to use demonstrative descriptions to refer to subkinds, as in the example (13) (at least in Brazilian Portuguese; for the same considerations and conclusions concerning English demonstratives, cf. Bowdle & Ward, 1995):

Pointing to a whale:

(12)   A baleia tá em extinção OK-kind
       the whale is in extinction
       'The whale is in extinction.'

(13) Essa baleia/Aquela baleia tá em extinção OK-subkind
this whale/ that whale is in extinction
'This whale/ that whale is in extinction.'

(12) can mean something like whale$_k$ is in extinction or something like a subkind of whales is in extinction; but (13) can only mean that a subkind of whales is in extinction, i.e. the one (subkind) being pointed to or represented by the one (whale) being pointed to.

Consider now another example ("K" is for kind and "SK" is for subkind – a kind interpretation would be something like "Dogs are friendly" and a subkind interpretation, "Golden retrievers are friendly"): Pointing to a golden retriever:

DEM + "empty name"	DEM description	DEF description
Esse animal é amigável ^{ok}K, ^{ok}SK This animal is friendly ^{ok}K, ^{ok}SK	Esse cachorro é amigável *K, ^{ok}SK This dog is friendly *K, ^{ok}SK	O cachorro é amigável ^{ok}K, *SK (specific only) The dog is friendly ^{ok}K, *SK
Esse tipo de animal é amigável ^{ok}K, ^{ok}SK This kind of animal is friendly ^{ok}K, ^{ok}SK	Esse tipo de cachorro é amigável *K, ^{ok}SK This kind of dog is friendly *K, ^{ok}SK	# O tipo de cachorro é amigável *K, *SK # The kind of dog is friendly *K, *SK

As the table above shows, the only way to refer to a kind using demonstrative descriptions is when the NP position in the description is filled with an "empty" or "non-informative" name, e.g. 'animal'[7], otherwise demonstrative descriptions can refer only to subkinds, as shown by the roll in the middle of the table above.

We propose that the restrictions of kind reference associated with demonstrative descriptions are due to the semantics of the demonstrative: to refer to kinds it is necessary to have the maximal situation, with no further restrictions[8]. But, as proposed by Wolter, demonstratives do impose a restriction: they work only on non-default situations, and that is why we cannot normally use demonstrative descriptions to refer to kinds, but only to subkinds – subkinds reference can be felicitous within non-default situations and doesn't require maximal situations.

So far, we presented a theory for weak definites which preserves the uniqueness presupposition associated with definites, we argued that demonstratives are a kind of definite which shows specific presupposition (i.e., uniqueness in a non-default situation), and we also showed that demonstrative reference to kinds is not free from certain restrictions; we claimed that these restrictions have to do with the semantics of the demonstratives which allows them to refer to subkinds but not to kinds (only when the NP position is filled with an "empty name"). In the next section we return to the possibilities of weak interpretations for demonstrative descriptions with the theoretical assumptions seen so far.

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[7] It is not clear why this is so. We need to achieve a better understating of the role played by the "empty names" and also the semantics of the "that kind of N" constructions. These are certainly important and interesting questions, but they are not our main concern in this paper.
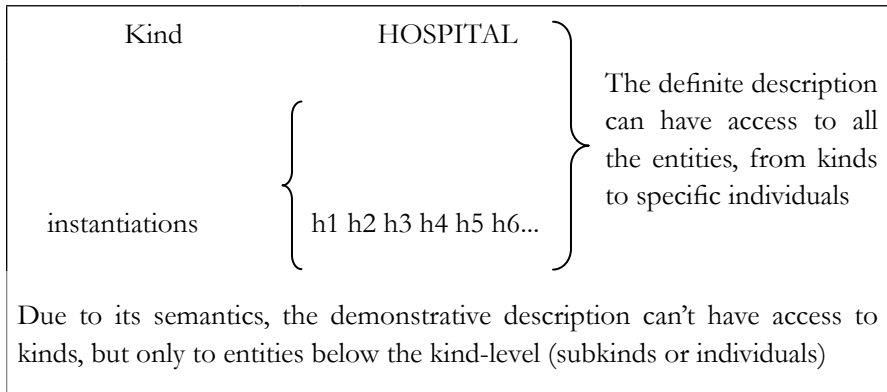
[8] That demonstrative descriptions don't refer to kinds because these descriptions impose restrictions on the discursive situations is yet a point to be fully made. But the common idea that kinds are spatiotemporally discontinuous individuals, modeled as the sum of all instances of the kind in every world (cf. Chierchia, 1998; Müller e Oliveira, 2004) agrees with our proposals concerning demonstrative descriptions. The characterization of kinds offered by Liebesman (2011) goes along the same lines.

4 Why not weak demonstratives?

The reason why it is impossible to have weak interpretations of demonstrative descriptions is that we need kind reference to have weak interpretations (according to Aguilar-Guevera and Zwarts (2010)'s proposal), but demonstratives are always restricted to smaller domains (i.e., non-default situations) in comparison to the definite description and therefore can't refer to kinds; since demonstratives can't refer to kinds (because kind reference works only in maximal or default situations), to only option left for the demonstratives is to refer to instantiations (or "regular individuals"), and so we don't have weak interpretations with demonstrative descriptions.

Consider the following illustration for the example (8), repeated below:

(8) João foi pra esse/aquele hospital
     João go$_{past}$ to this/that hospital
     'John went to this/that   hospital.'

Kind   HOSPITAL

The definite description can have access to all the entities, from kinds to specific individuals

instantiations   h1 h2 h3 h4 h5 h6...

Due to its semantics, the demonstrative description can't have access to kinds, but only to entities below the kind-level (subkinds or individuals)

As the illustration shows, the item 'hospital' in example (8) can, in principle, refer to kind-level or individual-level entities. Weak interpretations need access to the kind-level but, since demonstratives, due to their semantics, can't have access to the kind-level, the only

option left is the individual-level and that is why sentence (8) refers to a specific/particular hospital.

But, as we propose in the next section, there is a particular type of context in which demonstrative can have weak interpretations.

5   No weak demonstratives at all?...

In order to describe the contexts in which we argue that it is possible to have a weak interpretation with demonstrative descriptions, consider the two conclusions we arrived so far: (i) although demonstrative descriptions can refer to subkinds by pointing to instantiations if the right contextual conditions are fullfilled, they can refer to kinds only under specific restrictions (i.e., when combined with an "empty name", as in 'this *kind of* animal'); and (ii) although weak interpretations don't accept all types of modifiers, they do accept modifiers which result in subtypes or subkinds[9].

Putting these two ideas together, maybe there are some cases in which demonstrative descriptions can have weak interpretations. Consider the sentence (14) bellow, a well-behaved weak definite with a modifier:

(14)   João ligou pro médico do coração / de pele / do olho
        (cardiologista / dermatologia / oftalmologista)
        João call$_{past}$ the doctor of the heart/of skin/of the eye
        'John called the heart/skin/ eye doctor.'

Imagine now a context in which there is a list showing the names of medical specialties, and Peter, reporting what John did, says (15), while pointing to the label 'dermatology' ('skin doctor'):

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[9] It is far from easy to define subkinds and taxonomies; in this paper, we follow Dayal (2004).

(15)   João chamou esse médico.
       João call_{past} this doctor.
       'John   called   this doctor.'

Allergy and Immunology	Anesthesiology
Colon and Rectal Surgery	Dermatology
Emergency Medicine	Family Medicine
General Surgery	Internal Medicine
Medical Genetics	Neurological Surgery
Neurology	Nuclear Medicine
Obstetrics and Gynecology	Ophthalmology
Orthopaedic Surgery	Otolaryngology
Pathology	Pediatrics
Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation	Plastic Surgery
Preventive Medicine	Psychiatry
Radiation Oncology	Radiology
Thoracic Surgery	Urology

(https://www.aamc.org/students/medstudents/cim/specialties/)

John called this doctor.

In the suggested context, (15) has the main properties of "regular" or "ordinary" weak definites:

- (15)   John called this doctor and Mary did it too.

→ Ok if they did not call the same doctor, but doctors which have the same medical specialty, namely skin doctors (i.e., they may have called different skin doctors)
  - enriched meaning: called for medical assistance

  - narrow scope: Every student called this doctor[10] (i.e., every student called the skin doctor, but most likely different ones)

But what happened in this case? Our suggestion is that we establish, via contextual information (i.e., by pointing to a list of medical specialties), a taxonomy of subkinds, as the next illustration shows:

kinds	DOCTOR
subkinds	heart-doc. skin-doc. eye-doc. …
instantiations	d1 d2 d3 d4 d5 d6...

In this configuration, there are salient subkinds accessible and the demonstrative descriptions may refer to them, giving rise to a weak interpretation. Compare this illustration with the one associated to the example (8) – in that illustration there are no subkinds accessible[11].

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[10] Of course, this sentence (i.e., the construction 'this doctor') should be said while point to the label "dermatology" in the table shown above.

[11] This doesn't mean, of course, that there are not subkinds of hospitals, but only that the example in (8) didn't make them available and/or relevant, so they are not accessible to demonstrative descriptions.

In short, our claim is that in the context given for example (15) the use of the demonstrative description with a proper pointing gesture has exactly the same effect of the modifier which combined with definite descriptions results in a subkind.

For another example of this type of context, consider the following scenario, which summarized the press political tendencies from a small kingdom. In this kingdom, each newspaper falls neatly into one of three political tendencies: leftist (4 different newspapers), center (3 different newspapers), and rightist (3 different newspapers). The table below summarizes this scenario, by sorting the newspapers into three columns (the traces (----) stand for the newspapers' names):

NEWSPAPERS		
Leftist	**Rightist**	**Center**

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----	----	----
----	----	----

Pointing to the left-hand column, Mary says:

(16)   João vai ler esse jornal e Maria também.
João go$_{PRES}$ to read this newspaper and Mary too
'John will read this newspaper, and Mary will do that too.'

Again, in this context, the weak interpretation is prominent and we claim that the reason for this is that we have established and have access to subkinds of newspapers, and given that the demonstrative description ('this newspaper') can refer not only to a specific individual but also to a subkinds (i.e., left-hand newspaper no matter which one) it is possible to have a weak interpretation. Reference to subkinds guarantees weak interpretations.

In short: demonstratives cannot have access to kind-level individual because its domain is always smaller compared to the definite, but they can have access to subkind-level individuals; when there is no salient subkinds available, the only alternative for demonstrative descriptions is to refer to instantiations (individual-level). That is the reason why without a (contextually salient) taxonomy of subkinds there are no weak demonstratives ("*ʷ" stands for "no weak interpretation"):

(17)　*ʷ João foi pra esse　　hospital.
　　　　João go_PAST to this hospital
　　　　'John went to this/that hospital'

(18)　*ʷ João limpou　　essa/aquela　　garrafa azul.
　　　　João clean_PAST this / that bottle blue
　　　　'John cleaned this/that bottle blue.'

Unless a taxonomy of hospitals and/or blue bottles is in the common-background there are no weak interpretations available.

One further point: it seems impossible to combine a demonstrative description with a modifier that results in subkinds while at the same time preserve the weak interpretation (" *ʷ " stands for "no weak interpretation"):

(19)　*ʷ João vai ler este jornal de esquerda, e Maria também.
　　　　João go_PRES to read this newspaper of left, and Maria too.
　　　　*ʷ John will read this left-wing newspaper, and Mary will do that too.

Why is it not grammatical to use a modifier with the demonstrative to get a subkind interpretation? Our first (and tentative) answer is: because the demonstrative already performs the role of a modifier that leads to a subkind and further modifications of the subkind results in reference to instantiations.

We are not claiming that these examples are the "best" sentences ever, but only that, given the semantics of the demonstrative we adopted, combined with Aguilar-Guevara and Zwarts (2010)'s analysis, the only way to have weak demonstratives is establishing a taxonomy of subkinds.

Conclusion

In this paper, our point of departure is a theory for weak definites which preserves the uniqueness presupposition commonly associated with definites and which claims that weak interpretations involve reference to kinds. Our aim was to analyze weak interpretation with demonstrative descriptions because these descriptions show important similarities with definite ones. We present and adopt a theory for demonstrative descriptions which claim that their semantics is closely related to the semantics of the definite description and that they differ not with respect to their assertion content but with respect to their presuppositions.

Our next step was to investigate demonstrative reference to kinds because the theory for weak interpretation that we adopt explains the relevant data appealing to kind reference. When we put together all these considerations we can explain the facts concerning the possibilities of weak interpretation with demonstrative descriptions.

In our proposal for the existence and constraints concerning weak interpretations for demonstrative descriptions we can accommodate, without drastic modifications in the major picture of weak definites, the absence of weak demonstratives (which happens when there is no access to the subkind-level), on one hand, and the instances of weak demonstratives (which happen when there is access to the subkind-level), on the other hand.

The semantic analysis proposed for demonstratives in this paper also explains why demonstrative descriptions don't usually refer to kinds and why they denote only subkinds or (specific) individuals.

Finally, our analysis highlights the role of taxonomies and domain restriction in the understanding of noun phrases weak interpretations and can be seen as an argument in favor of Aguilar-Guevera and Zwarts (2010)'s proposal.

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