

The (dialect) syntax of demonstratives

Background: Demonstratives carry out multiple roles in the syntax; namely, some sort of determiner or adjectival type role ('adnominal' demonstratives, (1)) and some sort of pronominal role ('pronominal' demonstratives, (2)). In English, demonstratives inflect for number; cross-linguistically, demonstratives can also inflect for e.g. gender or case.

1. I read that_{SG} book. / I read those_{PL} books.
2. I read that_{SG}. / I read those_{PL}.

The relationship between (1) and (2) is taken to be a classic case of NP ellipsis (e.g. Ross 1967, Lobeck 1995). In this paper I present data from northern dialects of Scots which challenges this analysis. I subsequently extend Roberts' (2017) syntax for DP to account for the data, and furthermore provide evidence that, at least in these Scots varieties, *one(s)* must be a head noun, contra Kayne (2017) who argues *one(s)* is a complex determiner + classifier.

Data: In some northern Scots varieties, demonstratives do not have to inflect for number. Both *this* and *that* can be used to refer to singular and plural NPs, as seen in (3-4) and (5-6).

3. I have to ask you **this questions**.
4. I'm being very strict with **this 'last meal' question**. (Shetland, SCOSYA)
5. You know **that things** you get on Facebook?
6. I was just looking at **that thing** on the wall. (Caithness, SCOSYA)

This phenomenon has previously been observed in Shetland (Robertson & Graham 1952) and the north east (e.g. Murray 1872, Smith 2001). Data from the Scots Syntax Atlas (SCOSYA) indicates it is also the case across the north east of Scotland more generally, as well as in Caithness and Orkney. However, what has not been observed in the literature is that while demonstratives do not have to inflect in adnominal position, these same demonstratives can only have singular interpretations while in pronominal position.

7. I read this yesterday. [singular, *plural]
8. This looks better than that. [singular, *plural]

In order to get a plural interpretation, speakers must use an alternative strategy, combining *this/that* with *ones* such as (9), or using *them* as in (10).

9. I read this ones / that ones yesterday.
10. I read them yesterday.

The data from northern Scots is clearly problematic for a NP-ellipsis analysis of demonstratives, as we cannot elide e.g. *questions* from (3) and get the correct plural interpretation.

Analysis: Previous analyses of northern Scots demonstratives (Adger & Smith 2010) have not accounted for this difference between adnominal and pronominal demonstratives. I propose that the difference between the constructions is configurational, providing a syntax for Diessel's (1999) typological claim that although adnominal and pronominal demonstratives are most often homophonous, they must underlyingly have different syntax.

Specifically, I extend Roberts' (2017) syntax of DP. Roberts argues demonstratives are base generated in SpecNumP, and can move to SpecDP if a language has an EPP feature on D. English has an EPP feature, and so demonstratives raise.

This analysis can account neatly for the adnominal cases in northern Scots. While in standard English, adnominal demonstratives have interpretable number features, I propose the Scots *this* and *that* are underspecified for number. While raising to SpecDP, the adnominal demonstratives are able to check their [*u*Num] feature against the Num head and thus occur with either singular or plural nouns, as shown in Figure 1. However, the ellipsis issue remains.

Holmberg (1999) proposes that pronominal demonstratives are strong pronouns, following Cardinaletti & Starke's (1999) criteria. Strong pronouns in Roberts' DP syntax are head nouns, with *pro* in SpecnP. I propose that pronominal demonstratives should be treated in the same way, given that they meet the relevant criteria. Pronominal demonstratives are thus not derived from adnominal constructions, but are independent pronouns that are interpretably marked for number, as shown in Figure 2 for *this*. In standard English, a plural demonstrative pronoun e.g. *these* fills this noun head, and is interpretably marked for plural. However, in these northern Scots varieties, there are no plural pronominal demonstrative forms available.

Instead, speakers must use either a) *them*, an existing plural pronoun, or b) a construction consisting of the relevant underspecified adnominal form (either *this* or *that*) which checks as expected with the Num head, combined with what is effectively a dummy head noun that simply indicates plurality, *ones*, as shown in Figure 3.

Kayne (2017), following observations from Llobart-Huesca (2002), argues that *one(s)* cannot be a head noun in English due to the fact that it cannot be quantified, *one* cannot occur with an indefinite article, and *ones* cannot occur as a bare noun. However, this is not true in the varieties of Scots that use *this/that ones*. Quantified examples (11), examples with indefinite articles (12) and examples of bare noun *ones* (13-14) are frequently attested.

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|---|----------------------|
| 11. They had princesses and— and a few ones on quads | (Shetland, SCOSYA) |
| 12. I have another one ... I have a one that I got— a present. | (Caithness, SCOSYA) |
| 13. Maybe there's ones in the wash. | (North East, SCOSYA) |
| 14. I bought ones from Iris's. | (Shetland, SCOSYA) |

Given that *ones* is available as a head noun in these varieties, it is able to head the NP as a noun marked for plural, and thus ensure that the correct interpretation is available. The microvariation data supports Diessel's (1999) typological claim that if a language marks for *x*, *x* must be marked on pronominal demonstratives. Here we see this strongly; there is a gap where a plural pronominal form would be expected, and so speakers must devise alternative strategies to get the correct number reference.

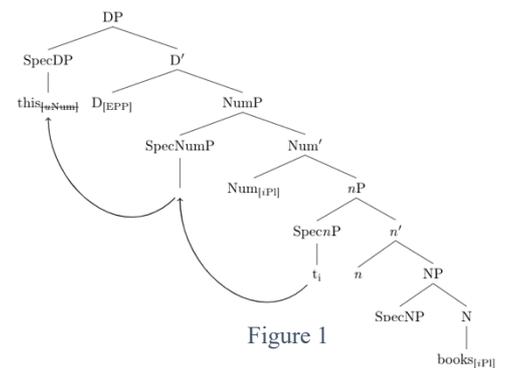


Figure 1

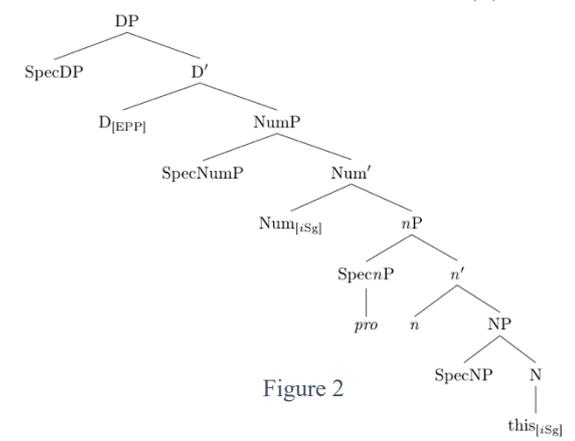


Figure 2

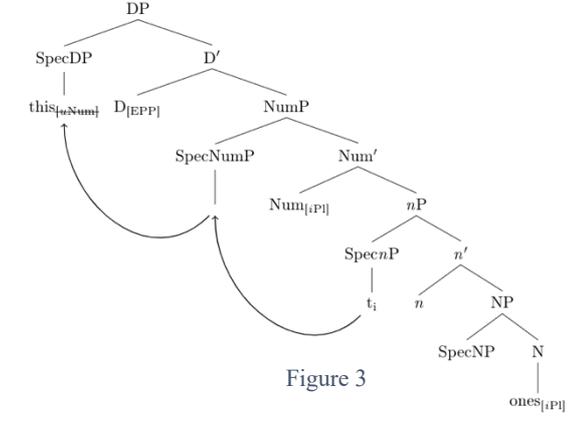


Figure 3