

## A Contrastive Study of Demonstratives in Kurdish and English

Shler Mohammed-Ali Najmaddin Rezhna Maaruf Hwsein

Sulaimani Polytechnic University University of Raparin  
Darbandikhan Technical Institute Faculty of Basic Education

---

**ABSTRACT:** This study explores the English and Central Kurdish<sup>1</sup> demonstratives as deictic expressions by stating their morphological, syntactical, and semantic properties. As a result, the similar and different linguistic properties of the demonstratives of the two languages are pointed out. The outcome of the study may provide more elucidation to linguistics in general. Additionally, it may give clearer vision to language pedagogy and translation.

-----  
Date of Submission: 20-09-2017

Date of acceptance: 06-10-2017  
-----

### I. DEMONSTRATIVES IN ENGLISH

#### 1. 1. Introduction

The term demonstratives is used in grammar and semantics to refer to a set of words and it roles as pointing to an entity in physical and linguistic context (Crystal, 2008, p. 135). They also indicate the spacial and temporal distance of the referent to the speaker and hearer (Leech & Svartvic, 2013, p. 521) (Maurizio Gotti).

Diessel states that it has been argued that demonstratives are determiners that do not take a complement and determiner with a nominal complement. Demonstratives correspond to verbs that are treated transitively in a determiner phrase or intransitively alone. In addition, both adnominal and pronominal demonstratives have been categorized as independent pronouns. There is also another argument which states that demonstratives are treated as “determiners which co-occur either with a noun or an empty head” (Diessel, 1999, P. 68). However, other grammarians assert on that pronominal and adnominal demonstratives belong to distinct classes despite the fact that they are phonologically and morphologically not different. “Adnominal this and that occur in a specific syntactic slot where they cannot be analyzed as pronouns, and there is no evidence that pronominal this and that function as determiners.” (Diessel, 1999, pp. 67-68; Roberts, 1999). The following examples are canonical uses of the English demonstratives:

- (1)
- a) *This* is beautiful
  - b) *Those* look particularly delicious.
  - c) *These* vehicles have four-wheel drive.
  - d) Stop *that* man!

(Roberts, 1999, p. 92)

In (1 a and b) *this* and *those* perform pronominal function, but in (1 c and d) *these* and *that* function as adnominal.

#### 1. 2. Primary Demonstratives

There are four primary demonstratives in English: *This*, *that*, *these*, and *those*. They “encode a two-way deictic distinction”, “proximals” to refer to things that are relatively close to the speaker, on the other hand “distals” to point to a referent that is distant from the speaker. They also present contrast in number: singular and plural (Greenbaum, 2000, p. 136; Endley, 2010, p. 133).

	Singular	Plural
Near	This	These
Distant	That	Those

(Leech and Svartvic, 2013)

The use of the demonstratives for singular and plural:

- (2)
- a. This book – These books

---

<sup>1</sup>Along this paper the word “Kurdish” has been used instead of Central Kurdish

b. That book – Those books

(ibid)

The use of the demonstratives for near and not near things:

(3)

a. This paper is for the printer.

b. These reports are for the meeting.

c. That desk is Janet's.

d. Those are the sales reports.

(Reppen & Gordon, 2012, p. 40)

*This, that, these, and those* are used before nouns to identify and describe people and things:

(4)

a. This photo is my favorite.

b. That little girl in the photo is my sister's daughter.

c. These charts are helpful.

d. Those papers are important.

The four primary demonstratives are used as pronouns to identify things:

(5)

a. This is the only copy machine.

b. That is the color printer.

c. These are the reports for the meeting.

d. Those are my keys.

For introducing people only pronominal *this* and *these* are used:

(6)

A This is Claudia.

B Hi, Claudia! Nice to meet you.

A These are my co-workers, Mena and Liz.

B Hello. Nice to meet you.

(ibid)

The demonstrative *this* can be used to introduce new information in a narrative:

(7)

"I was walking along the street when this girl came up to me..." (= "a girl I'm going to tell you about")

(Leech and Svartvik, 1994: 60)

Arts and McMahon state that demonstrative pronouns are similar to definite article *the* since they indicate that the noun phrase they introduce are definite:

(8)

a. This / that politician

b. These / those politician

(Arts & McMahon, 2006)

*Nevertheless this* can function as an indefinite determiner in informal speech. In this case, *this* corresponds approximately to *a* or *some*.

(9) And there was *this* Frenchman who went to a cricket match.

(Alexander, 1988, p.323)

Likewise, *these* has the role of indefinite article when introducing new information.

(10) There's all *these* horror stories about it happening, but I've never actually heard of it, actually happen to anybody.

(Greenbaum, 2000, p.136)

When the speaker/writer and hearer/reader share the same context, co-reference may occur. In such contexts, demonstratives can be used as anaphoric expressions referring back to already mentioned antecedents and as cataphoric expressions referring to later parts of the discourse (Ghubin, 2006, p. 24) cited from (Quirk et al. 1985, p. 382). (11 a & b) are examples of the use of anaphoric and cataphoric demonstratives

(11)

a. Novelist Wright Morris says he always is working on a book "because this is the way I breathe". (Fan, 2013, p. 74) cited from (Botley & McEnery, 2001))

b. 75 per cent of those who returned the questionnaire were in favor of the proposal. (Leech & Svartvik, 2013)

Following some other scholars, Fan also regards *it* as a demonstrative reference (Fan, 2013, p. 74).

Nonetheless, *that* refers to things only (not people) when it is used as a relative antecedent. *Those* can be a referent to people.

(12) 75 per cent of those who returned the questionnaire were in favor of the proposal.

(Leech & Svartvik, 2013)

According to the distributional properties of Quirk et al. (1958), in which determinatives are distinguished as three sub-classes, the demonstratives fall in to the central determinatives. As explained in (13)

(13) These three students (Arts & McMahon, 2006)<sup>2</sup>

*S/he* replaces pronominal *this* and *that* and *they* replaces pronominal *these* and *those* when the referent is human or human-like. Roberts assumes that in this case *s/he* and *they* have the use of the demonstratives. (Roberts, 1999, p. 92)

### 1. 3. Other Demonstratives

Such probably have a demonstrative sense (like that or like this) as a pronoun or as a determiner relating to kinds.

(15)

a. Do I understand you to be saying that in such an accident uh a passenger would be thrown uh first of all forward and then backwards?

b. He is entitled to such payments, subject only to the limited category of cross-claims which the law permits to be raised as defences by way of set-off in such circumstances.

(Greenbaum, 2000, p. 137)

Demonstratives, both the singular and the plural pronouns can be used as pro-forms, as “reduced” NPs, to substitute for a noun phrase:

(16)

a. *This* chair is more comfortable than that. (= that chair or that one)

b. These apples are sweeter than those (= these apples or these ones)

(Fan, 2013, p. 74 & (Ghubin, 2006, p. 23) cited from (Quirk et al, 1985: p. 372))

According to the findings of (Fan, 2013, p. 81) *this* is used more frequently than *that* to refer to antecedents.

Leech and Svartvic state that *that* and *those* can be used as the word that is the antecedent referent of the relative pronoun as illustrated with the following sentences:

(17)

Richard took up a life similar to that (which) he had lived in San Francisco.

## II. DEMONSTRATIVES IN KURDISH LANGUAGE:

### 2.1. Introduction

Demonstratives are described as those words that point to a definite entity, near or far, to identify the entity. “a word whose function is to isolate one of the things from the others, indicates the proximity and remoteness from the speaker and hearer, and is followed by a gesture or pointing at the referent.” (رفیق شوانی، 2011: 45)

According to the initial literature demonstratives belong to two parts of speech; pronominal demonstratives and adjectival demonstrative. However, there is another classification, which puts the demonstratives as one group that can be used as demonstrative pronoun and demonstrative adjective. When they are treated as pronouns, semantically, they role as one type of noun and they can perform all the functions of noun in a sentence; as (subject or object, etc). They replace the noun and are instantly seen in one part in the sentence.

(18)

a. (ئەم کتێبە مەکرە، ئەوە بکرە.) don't buy *this* book. Buy *that*

b. (ئەمانە کین؟) Who are *these*?

c. (ئەوانە چی دەکەن؟) what do *those* do?

(نوری عەلی ئەمین، 2013: 106)

The term (*ئەوە*) *that* in (18 a) in the second sentence replaces the noun *book* and demonstrates it as well. In ( b. and c.) the demonstratives *these* and *those* are used instead of a the name of a number of people.

In addition, demonstratives are used as demonstrative adjective. It is described as “an adjective that refers to something or someone” (نوری عەلی ئەمین، 2013: 130). They are used with a noun and split into two parts. One of the parts precedes the noun and the other part follows the noun. Their form appears as the following: (ئەو ... ئەو) (ئەم ... ئەم) (ئەو ... ئەو) (ئەو ... ئەو)

These two parts refer to nouns. When they refer to a noun, they define it (نەزیمانەبەدۆڵا خۆشناو، 2012: 79-80). As illustrated in (19)

(19)

<sup>2</sup> This example was made by the researcher who brought the words (these) which is central demonstrative and (thee) which is post demonstrative, according to the classification of the determinatives by Quirk et al. (1985: 253ff)



There are many other demonstratives in Kurdish Language that are used in other variants and dialects, but here Central Kurdish is mentioned such as: هۆوه، هۆوانه. (that, those) (مهسعود محهمهد، 1974: 41)

Demonstratives determine a name that is a determinative for another noun as;

(24)

a. خاوهنی ئەم کێلگهیه (کیلگه) (owner of this field)

b. جوئیاری ئەم ناوچهیه (ناوچه) (peasant of this area)

They also define a noun that the name is determined and occurs within the demonstrative adjective.

(25)

a. ئەم باخهوانهی ئیوه (باخهوان) (this gardener of you)

b. ئەو خانوهی شاسورا (خانور) (that house of Shaswar)

When the demonstrative is used to define the whole term (the determiner and the referent), the determiner and the referent are changed to a compound word and then it occurs within the demonstrative adjective.

میشکی سور (ئەم مریشکه سوره). (26)

Red chicken (this red chicken)

Demonstrative adjective can also be used for nouns that are referent of quantifiers as explained in example (27)

(27)

a. ئەم دوو کتیبه بینه. (bring this two books)

b. ئەو دوو پیاوه هاتن. (That two men came)

Co-reference is another use of the demonstratives. They are treated as Cataphor to refer to a referent that occurs before the referent and as anaphor to refer to the later part of the discourse.

دالیا هەرچهنده وێنه ی زۆر دهقیقی بهکار هینا بو و مسفکردن و ناساندنی خهونهکانی، بهلام ئەوه بوو به بهکێک له بهر بهستی کارهکانی.

(Even though Dalia used a very precise picture to describe and identify her dreams, that became one of the obstacles in her works)

b. ئەوهی ئێمه مهبهستمانه، کارهکانی حوکمهته. (that we consider is the government's jobs).

(محهمهدی مهحوی، 2001: 213).

Moreover, the four primary demonstratives of Kurdish can refer to people when they are used as relative antecedents.

(28)

ئەوهی که هات) those who came (ئەوهی که هاتن)

ئهمهی که دانیشتن) these who sit. (ئهمهی که دانیشتن)

(شیرکو بابان، 2008: 61)

### **Contrastive Analyzes**

The outcome of the information above about English and Kurdish demonstratives is pointing out the following similar and different points between the two languages.

#### **Similar points :**

1. Demonstratives exist in both Central Kurdish and English.
2. In both languages demonstratives indicate that the referent of the associated noun phrase is near or remote and show the grammatical category of number: singular or plural.
3. Despite the fact that there are some differences in the classification of the demonstratives in both Kurdish and English, grammarians in general, divide demonstratives into two groups; demonstrative pronoun and demonstrative adjective.
4. They are used to point to an entity in a situation or a sentence.
5. Quantifiers that fall in to the central determiners in English, precede the noun and follow the demonstratives in both languages.
6. In both Kurdish and English, some grammarians' claim denote that demonstratives do not function as a pronoun since even if there is not a noun to be determined, there is an empty head or an entity in the speaker's mind.
7. Demonstratives, both the singular and the plural pronouns can be used as pro-forms, as "reduced" NPs, to substitute for a noun phrase.
8. Both Kurdish and English demonstratives do not demonstrate gender of their referents.
9. Demonstratives have co-referential use in both English and Kurdish.
10. Some grammarians in English language regard it as a demonstrative reference. Likewise, there are Kurdish grammarians consider third person pronouns as a demonstrative.

#### **Differences:**

1. Demonstratives precede their antecedents in English Language, but in Kurdish their antecedents occur within the demonstratives.

2. The pronominal demonstratives in Kurdish Language occurs as a part, but when it is used as adnominal, they split into two part and the noun they refer to occurs within the demonstrative. However, the demonstratives in English occur as one part in every situation.
3. In Kurdish when the demonstrative is used to refer to a determiner and its referent, the determiner and the referent are changed to a compound word and then it occurs within the demonstrative adjective, however, such changes do not occur in English.
4. There are several points about English demonstratives that have been stated in the present paper, still have not been worked on in the literature of Kurdish demonstratives.
5. Kurdish demonstratives have more than one form, but English have only one form.
6. In Kurdish Language, *that* (ئەو) is used generally and more frequently than *this* (ئەم), but *this* is used more commonly to refer to antecedents in English.

### III. CONCLUSION

This study indicated that there are more similarities than differences between English and Kurdish demonstratives as expected because they belong to one family. The usage of the Kurdish and English demonstratives in different contexts are mostly analogous. However, there are vast differences in the form and position between English and Kurdish demonstratives.

#### 2. Implication of the Study

The findings of the study provide a number of points to reflect on in terms of pedagogical implication. Language teachers can help students to identify the similarities and this leads learners to develop rapidly in learning second language. In addition, instructors can use a method that support the students to avoid (interference) the errors that are affected by their first language. The discoveries might also give a clear vision between the two languages and this facilitates translation.

#### 3. Suggestions for other studies

Despite the fact that, there are precise investigations on the demonstratives from linguistic aspect, more work is needed to describe the use of the Kurdish demonstratives in different contexts. According to the literature, the choice of both Kurdish and English demonstrative is not decided by the speakers as a result of proximity and distance of the items they refer to only, especially in discourse. There are factors that affect both native speakers and second language speakers in the choice of the demonstratives and they need to be investigated. It will make Kurdish language more accessible and easier to be learned by speakers of other languages if the points that have not been investigated in the Kurdish literature be studied.

### REFERENCES

- [1] Arts, B., & McMhon, A. (2006). *The Handbook of English Linguistics*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- [2] Crystal, D. (2008). *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.
- [3] Diessel, H. (1999). *Demonstratives: Form, Function, and Grammaticalization*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- [4] Endley, M.J. (2010). *Linguistic Perspectives on English Grammar*. The United States of America: Information Age Publishing.
- [5] Fan, c. (2013). Anaphoric Demonstratives and their Antecedents in English Academic Discourse. *International Journal for English Linguistics*, 73-84
- [6] Ghubin, B. A. *Demonstratives in English and Arabic: A Contrastive Study*. Journal of College of Languages, 17-30, Baghdad University.
- [7] Greenbaum, S. (2000). *The Oxford Reference Grammar*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [8] Leech, G., & Svarvic, j. (2013). *A Communicative Grammar of English*. New York: Routledge.
- [9] Maurizio Gotti, M. D. (n.d.) *English Historical Linguistics 2006: Syntax and Morphology*.
- [10] Reppen, R., Gordon, D. (2012). *Grammar and Beyond Level 1*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [11] Roberts, C. (1999). *Demonstratives as Definites*. Conference on Mapping and Semantics. (pp. 89-136). Cornell University: CSLI Publications.
- [12] Yoguchi, M. (2001). The Function of Non-deictic that in English. *Journal of Pragmatics* 1125- 1155.

#### Kurdish References

- سەرچاوهكان به كوردی: [13]
- i. 1- ئهروههمانی حاجی ماریف، ریزمانی کوردی، بهرگی بهکهم (وشهسازی)، بهشی دوهم، جیناو، بهغدا، 1987.
  - ii. 2- تارا موحسین قادر، جیناو لیکدانهوهیهکی نوئ له زمانی کوردیدا، ماجستیر، کولێژی زمان، زانکۆی سلێمانی، 2004.
  - 3- رفیق شوانی، وشهسازی زمانی کوردی، چاپی بهکهم، ههولێر، 2011.

- i. 4-زهري ع. يوسويؤفا، شيوه‌ي سلیمانی زمانی کوردی، و. کوردستان موکریانی، چاپی یه‌که‌م، چاپخانه‌ی وه‌زارته‌ی په‌روه‌رده، هه‌ولێر، 2005.
- ii. 5-شیرکۆ بابان، هه‌ندێک له‌ ئاکاره‌ ره‌نگینه‌کانی ریزمانی کوردی، چاپخانه‌ی خانی (ده‌وک)، چاپی یه‌که‌م، 2005.
- iii. 6-مه‌سه‌ود مه‌مه‌د، وردبوونه‌وه‌ له‌ چه‌ند باسێکی ریزمانی کوردی، چاپخانه‌ی کۆری زانیاری کورد، به‌غدا 1974.
- iv. 7-نهریمان عه‌بدوڵلا خۆشناو، ریزمانی کوردی کرمانجی ناوه‌راست و کرمانجی سه‌روو، چاپی یه‌که‌م، چاپخانه‌ی رۆژه‌لات، هه‌ولێر، 2012.
- v. 8-نهریرین فه‌خری، کوردستان موکریانی، ریزمانی کوردی بۆ پۆلی یه‌که‌می به‌شی زمانی کوردی زانکۆی سه‌لاحه‌دین، 1982.
- 9-مه‌مه‌دی مه‌حوی، رسته‌سازی کوردیی، زانکۆی سلیمانی، 2001.
- c. 10-نوری عه‌لی ئەمین، ریزمانی کوردی، چاپی سێیه‌م، چاپخانه‌ی شه‌هاب، هه‌ولێر، 2013. [14]
- [15] Kurdish abstract
- [16] پوخته
- [17] ئەم توێژینه‌وه‌یه‌ به‌ناوی (به‌راوردکردنی نامرازی نیشانه‌ له‌ ئیوان زمانی کوردی و ئینگلیزی)ه‌ ئێیدا تیشک خراوته‌ سه‌ر نامرازی نیشانه‌ له‌ هه‌ردوو زمانی ئینگلیزی و کوردیی کرمانجی ناوه‌راست. پاشان خستنه‌ رووی خاسیه‌ته‌ مۆرفۆلۆجی و سینتاکتیکی و سیمانتیکیه‌کانی له‌ هه‌ردوو زماندا. خاله‌ جیاواز و له‌یه‌که‌چوومه‌کانی خاسیه‌ته‌ زمانه‌وانیه‌کانی نامرازی نیشانه‌ له‌ هه‌ردوو زمانه‌که‌ له‌ ئه‌نجامدا دیاریکراوه‌. به‌هه‌می ئەم توێژینه‌وه‌یه‌ روونکردنه‌وه‌ی زیاتر ده‌دات به‌ زمانه‌وانی به‌ گشتی. له‌گه‌ڵ ئەوه‌شدا به‌رچاوه‌روونی زیاتر ده‌دات به‌ بواری وانه‌ ووتنه‌وه‌ و هه‌رگیزان.
- [18]