

Demonstratives in Romani – a Minimalist account

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1 Demonstratives in Romani

According to Matras (2002: 103–104) the demonstratives constitute in Romani a four-term system that is typologically striking compared to most of the European languages. This four-term system covers every logical combination of the two vowels *a* and *o* that bear semantic distinctions, and the two demonstrative stems *d-* and *k-*. This system has been retained in a majority of Romani dialects, but in the convenience sample of 30 dialects Matras (2000) used, the smallest demonstrative systems only comprise two terms: Polish and North Russian dialects lack the proximate demonstratives *dava* and *dova*, while in *sinti* and *manuš*, the remote demonstratives *kava* ja *kova* are missing. Finnish Romani distinguishes between long and short forms of the demonstratives. The 'long' demonstratives *(a)davva*, *kovva* and *(a)dovva* constitute a three-term-system similar to the ones in some Russian, South-Polish and Austrian Burgenland romani. The original four-term-system survives, however, in the 'short' demonstratives *(a)da*, *(a)do*, *(a)ka* and *(a)ko* (Valtonen 1968: 125).

Table 1: Demonstratives in Finnish Romani.

TYPE	LONG FORMS				SHORT FORMS
	NOM.SG	OBL.SG	NOM.PL	OBL.PL	(INDECL.)
Simplex					
proximate	<i>davva</i>	<i>dāles</i>	<i>dāla</i>	<i>dālen</i>	<i>(a)da</i>
Specific					
proximate					<i>(a)ka</i>
Simplex					
remote	<i>dovva</i>	<i>dōles</i>	<i>dōla</i>	<i>dōlen</i>	<i>(a)do</i>
Specific					
remote	<i>kovva</i>	<i>kōles</i>	<i>kōla</i>	<i>kōlen</i>	<i>(a)ko</i>

2 Word order and agreement in DPs containing demonstratives

Determiner phrases containing demonstratives can be divided into three types in the European Romani dialects (1a–c). The determinerless structure *N > Dem is unattested (Matras 2000: 104).

- (1) a. kadava rom
 this man
 'this man'
 (Dem > N)
- b. kadava o rom
 this DET man
 'this man'
 (Dem > Det > N)
- c. o rom kadava
 DET man this
 'this man'
 (Det > N > Dem) (Examples Boretzky 2000: 43.)

The first type shown in (1a), that is incompatible with definite determiners in the most commonly found in Romani dialects. I will call it Type 1. The RMS database suggests that this type occurs in 93 of 100 samples describing 50–60 dialects. Type 1 is the only option in all northern dialects (e.g. Finnish Romani, German and Italian Sinti, Manuš, Romani of Wales, Polish and Latvian Romani, xaladitka) and Central dialects (e.g. Böhm, Burgenland, West and East Slovak, Romungro and Gurvari).

In Finnish Romani, adnominals demonstratives always precede NP (2a), adjective modifiers (2b), genitive adnominalis (2c), and often possessives (2d) as well as most quantifiers or quantificational adjectives (2e). The possessives may sometimes precede the demonstratives as in spoken Finnish (3a). Furthermore of universal quantifiers *sāro* 'all, entire' and *sakko* 'every' may occur before the demonstratives, but such case they head a QP that gets DP as its complement (3b).

- (2) a. davva čēr
 this:NOM.SG house
 'this house'
 (Dem > N)
- b. davva baro čēr
 this:NOM.SG big:MASK house
 'this big house'
 (Dem > Adj > N)
- c. davva phālesko čēr
 this:NOM.SG brother:OBL.SG-GEN-MASK house

- 'this house of the brother'
(Dem > N_{Gen} > N)
- d. davva mo čēr
this:NOM.SG my:MASK house
'(this) my house'
(Dem > Poss > N)
- e. davva sāro rakkiba
this:NOM.SG all:MASK talking
'all this talking'
(Dem > Adj > N)
- (3) a. mo davva čēr
my:MASK this:NOM.SG house
'(this) my house'
(Poss > Dem > N)
- b. sāro davva rakkiba
all:MASK this:NOM.SG talking
'all this talking'
(Q > Dem > N)

The second type of DPs containing a demonstrative, represented by (1b), follows a greek pattern and is an option to the in (1a) in some of the Romani dialects spoken Greece and Macedonia and certain kalderaš variants. The RMS database suggests that this occurs in Romacilikanes, Sofades, Čurjarja Arilje, and Macedonian Arli. I will call it Type 2. In some Romani dialects, in which demonstratives are incompatible with definite determiner, postnominal adjectival modifiers may have a definite determiner of their own. This yields a structure Dem > N > Det > Adj, e.g. in kalderaš *kado kaš o baro* 'this:MASK tree ART big:MASK = 'this big tree' (example Boretzky 1994: 55, ref. Matras 2000: 102).

Let us take a look at the final Type 3 shown in (1c) is the only possible one in no Romani dialects, in other words, omitting demonstrative raising is always optional in Romani. According to Matras' (2000) convenience sample, this kind of structures are optionally found in kalderaš, ursari and Agia Varvara; RMS database suggests occurrence of postnominals demonstratives in spoitari, too. Kalderaš belongs to the Vlax group, while Ursari and Spoitari are classified as South Balkan dialects (Boretzky (1999a, 1999b, 2000b, 2000c) sees Ursari to belong the dialect group South Balkan I together with Arli/Erli, Sepeči, Rumelian, Zargarin, Romano and the Crimean Romani dialect (Matras 2002: 223). No dialect group seems to offer the possibility of Type 3 systematically. The syntax of DPs that contain a demonstrative seem not to follow well the usual classification of Romani dialects (e.g. Matras 2002), but have an areal nature unlike external possession, for instance, discussed by Crevels and Bakker (2000). According to Boretzky (2000: 43) Type 3 may have been formed as a result of greek influence (cf. *aftos o andras* 'this Det man'), but its occurrence in Vlax dialects may be reinforced by Romanian influence (cf. *om-ul acesta* 'man-DET this'). Matras (2000: 102) considers the postnominal position of the

demonstratives as postponed modification and possible as pronominal elements independent of the head nouns. As such, the demonstratives can independently represent the referent. Furthermore postnominal demonstratives have a weaker the determiner character than the pronominal ones, which may explain the obligatory occurrence of a definite determiner in the construction. (Matras 2000: 103–4.)

In a majority of Romani dialects, pronominal demonstratives agree with their head nouns in primary case (i.e. nominative and oblique), but not in secondary case (4). Some Romani dialects retain a gender distinction in the oblique or non-nominative (5a), while in other dialects, the gender distinction becomes neutralized in favour of the unmarked masculine (5b). Postnominal demonstratives behave like postnominal adjective attributes and possessives: they receive a full noun-like case inflection (6). (Matras 2000: 101.)

- (4) phendem kodo-le rom-es-ke
 said.1SG DEM-OBL.M man-LayerI.M-DAT
 'I said to this man' (Kalderaš/Lovari, Matras 2000: 101.)
- (5) a. kada-la romnj-a-sa
 this-OBL.F woman-LayerI.F-SOC
 'with this woman'
 b. kada-le rom-e(s)-sa
 this-OBL.M man-LayerI.M-SOC
 'with this man' (Kalderaš/Lovari, Matras 2000: 101.)
- (6) e gaž-es-ke kodo-les-ke
 ART man-LayerI.M-DAT DEM-LayerI.M-DAT
 'for that man' (Kalderaš, Boretzky 1994: 55, ref. Matras 2000: 101.)

In Finnish Romani, demonstratives show number agreement with the head NP as shown in (7). Unlike in many Romani dialects, demonstratives do not agree with the head noun in gender and often neither in primary case (8). No description of Finnish Romani mentions of a feminine form of demonstratives. DPs containing a possessor are ambiguous as the examples in (9) suggest.

- (7) a. davva rankani/-o džuvli
 this:NOM.SG beautiful:FEM/MASC woman:NOM.SG
 'this beautiful woman'
 b. dala rankane/-o džuvja
 these:NOM.PL beautiful:PL/MASC woman:NOM.PL
 'these beautiful women'
- (8) a. dovva romni
 this:NOM.SG Romni:NOM.SG
 'this Romni'
 b. dovva/ dola romjaha
 this:NOM.SG/ this:OBL.SG Romni:OBL.SG-INSTR
 'with this Romni'

- (9) a. davva phālesko čēr
 this:NOM.SG brother:OBL.SG-GEN-MASC house
 'this house of the brother/the house of this brother'
- b. davva phālesko džuvli
 this:NOM.SG brother:OBL.SG-GEN-MASK wife:NOM.SG
 'this wife of the brother/the wife of this brother'
- c. davva phenjako dād
 this:NOM.SG sister:OBL.SG-GEN-MASK father
 'this father of the sister/the father of this sister'

3 A minimalist view of Romani DPs containing demonstratives

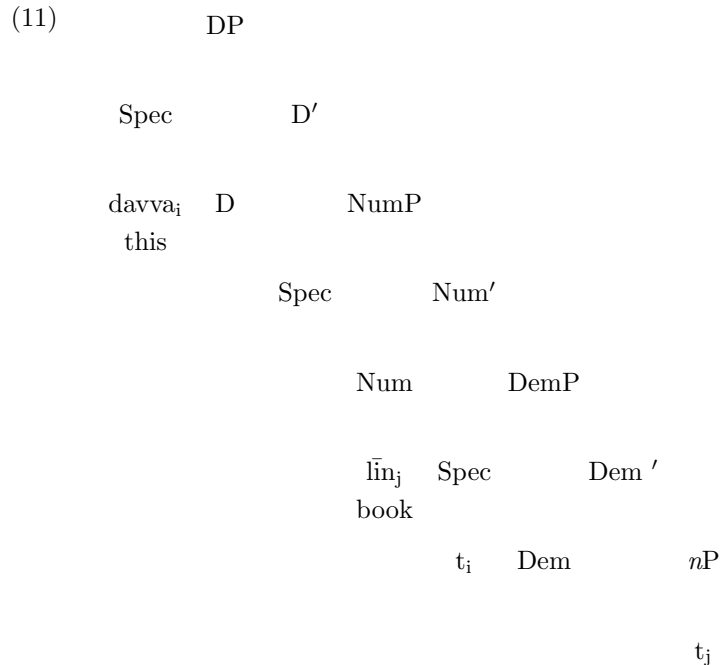
In a number of languages, such as English, French, and Italian, demonstratives and definite determiners are in complementary distribution. Therefore it was considered in the early generative tradition that demonstratives and definite determiners share a syntactic position, despite of having different semantic features. The generative work at the beginning of the 1990s showed that demonstratives and definite determiners occur different structural positions (Giusti 1991, 1992; Cornilescu 1992; Brugè 1996; Roca 1996; Bernstein 1993, 1997). As a result, the demonstratives were interpreted either as adjectives (Cinque 1996) base-generated as a part of universal serialization of adjectives either above or below numerals and descriptive adjective, and depending of language, they could be either raised to a higher position or remain in situ. It was on the other hand suggested by several linguists working on DPs in Romance languages such Spanish, Italian, Catalan and French, that demonstratives are rather base-generated as specifiers of a functional projection located between DP and NP (e.g. Giusti 1992; Bernstein 1993, 1997, 2001). Demonstratives, then, are seen as SpecDemP, while definite determiners are base-generated as heads of D.

Several suggestions have been made for the structural location of DemP. According to Giusti (1993, 1994a, 1997, ref. 2002), demonstratives are maximal elements adjoined to functional specifiers, and they are located immediately below the highest functional projection. However Brugè and Giusti (1996) claim that in many languages the demonstratives are rather specifiers that located quite low in DPs, and for instance their position as second elements in (10) is derived. According to Brugè (2002), the structural position of DemP is below other functional projections containing different classes of the adjectives, but above the NP projection.

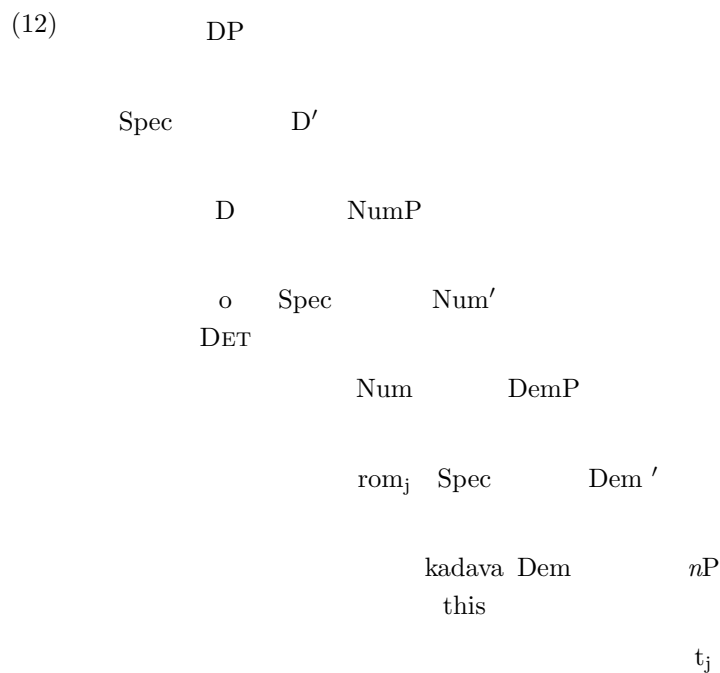
- (10) a. băiatul acesta frumos
 boy-DEF this nice
 'this nice boy'
- b. *băiatul frumos acesta

From the point of view of Giusti (1992) and Bernstein (1993, 1997, 2001), common to Type 1 and Type 2 is a demonstrative raising. Demonstrative raising is better illustrated by the Finnish Romani example (11). Brugè and Giusti explain the need for demonstratives to raise by the assumption that the referential and deictic features of demonstrative are checked in SpecDP. According to Brugè (2002) the obligatoriness of demonstrative raising follows a parametrized principle stating when the feature [+ referential] is checked. Most Romani dialects have a strong feature [+ referential] that is checked before Spell-Out so that demonstrative must be raised to its prenominal position in SpecDP.

Type 1 and Type 2 are distinguished from each other by (in)compatibility with definite determiners. The fact that some Romani dialect allow demonstratives and definite determiners to co-occur within the DPs, supports a view like the one of Giusti, assuming demonstrative raising to SpecDP. Giusti (2002) explains cross-linguistic differences in the (in)compatibility of demonstratives with definite determiners by differences in the realization of the referential feature of D saliently either in D itself or its specifier. In the those languages in which demonstratives are compatible with definite determiners both the specifier of D and the head D are made visible. On the other hand in languages, in which demonstratives and definite determiners in complementary distribution, either the specifier of D or the head D is made visible, but not simultaneously both of them.



Example (12) corresponds to Type 3 and, thus, represents a Romani dialect that allows postnominal demonstratives. The possibility of postnominal demonstratives in Romani dialects supports the assumption of a low structural base-position of demonstrative (as suggested for Romance languages by Giusti 1992). The noun is raised to a higher functional projection to receive case, while the demonstrative remains in situ. Brugè (2002) assumes that in cases like this the demonstrative has a weak [+referential] feature that is checked after Spell-Out but before LF.



4 Summary

Table 2: DPs containing demonstratives. A summary of characteristics.

	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3
Demonstrative Raising	yes	yes	no
Strong feature [+referential]	yes	yes	no
Weak feature [+referential]	no	no	yes
SpecD and D visible	no	yes	–
SpecD or D visible	yes	no	–

Table (2) summarizes the characteristics of the different structural types of DPs containing demonstratives. Following the minimalist tradition, I have assumed here that demonstratives have a low base-position in DPs, but –

according to parametrized principle, they may undergo raising to Spec,D. Demonstrative raising takes place in a majority of Romani dialects which thus have a strong feature [+referential] that is checked before Spell-Out. A relatively small number of dialects permit contact-induced variation, and they may have either strong or weak [+referential] feature. The weak [+referential] feature is checked after Spell-Out but before LF. As a result, there is no need for the demonstrative to leave its base-position in SpecDemP. (In)compatibility with definite determiners depends on whether both SpecD and D can be made simultaneously visible.