

Conceptual Metaphors Underlying the Semantic Extensions of the English Demonstratives THIS and THAT

英語指示詞 This/That の意味拡張を動機付けている概念メタファー

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英語の This と That は、文脈指示詞として様々な方法で使われる。その用法はいずれも現場指示詞としての This と That の用法に基づいていると言われているが、実際にどのようにしてこれらの文脈指示詞としての用法が現場指示詞としての用法と結びついているのかは論じられていない。本研究では、認知意味論の枠組みを使って、文脈指示詞の用法を動機付けている概念メタファーを探る。その基本となっているのは、「談話空間は物理的空間である」、そして「談話空間の中の指示対象は物理的空間の中の物体である」という概念メタファーである。また、「心理的距離は物理的空間距離である」という概念メタファーによって、指示対象が話者に近いか、遠いかを判断し、This か That のいずれかを選んでいると考えられる。

キーワード

discourse deictic (文脈指示詞)、referent (指示対象)、semantic motivation (意味の動機付け)、cognitive lexical semantics (語彙の認知的意味)、conceptual metaphor (概念メタファー)

1. Introduction

The English words *this* and *that* and their plural counterparts, *these* and *those* are demonstrative words that indicate which entity or entities a speaker is referring to and distinguishes those entities from others. Demonstrative words are also deictic words in that the meaning of the word (or what the word is referring to) changes according to the context in which it is used. *This/these* and *that/those* are thus in the same group as other deictic words such as *here*, *there*, *he/she/they*, or *today/yesterday/tomorrow* which refer to the personal, temporal or spatial aspect of an utterance.

Students of English learn in the early stages of their study that the English demonstratives *this/these* and *that/those* are used to point to objects as being near to or distant from the participants in the conversation. They learn that *this/these* is used to point to entities close to the speaker, while *that/those* is used to point to entities away from the speaker (and close to the hearer). *This, that, these* and *those* can be used as a pronoun as in (1), or can be used as a determiner as in (2).

(1) *This* is a book.

(2) *Those* tapes are not for sale.

Everyone knows, however, that the use of *this* and *that* goes beyond that of pointing to objects that exist in the physical space of the participants of the conversation. *This* and *that* can also refer to a linguistic entity in the text or in the discourse that appears neutral with respect to proximity or distance from the participants of the conversation. When a demonstrative is used to refer to a word or phrase in a text or in a conversation, it is called an anaphora or a discourse deixis. In example (3), *this/that* in the second sentence refers to the *coffee shop* mentioned in the first sentence, and in example (4) taken from Cornish (2001: 302), *this* refers to what the speaker will talk about in the linguistic context that follows.

(3) I went into a coffee shop. *This/That* is where I met Jane.

(4) Listen to *this*: a man went into a butcher's shop wanting to buy a whole pig, and...
(Cornish 2001: 302)

In the following example by Halliday & Hasan (1976: 66), *that* does not refer to a particular linguistic entity in the sentence uttered by A, but refers to the total event of their breaking of the vase.

(5) A: They broke a Chinese vase.

B: *That* was careless. (Halliday & Hasan 1976: 66)

Thus, the demonstratives *this* and *that* are used not only to point to entities in physical space but are also used to refer to entities recoverable by the hearer from the linguistic context.

One could say that in all of the examples above, the basic function of the demonstrative is that of pointing to an entity and that the use of a demonstrative as a discourse deixis is derived by a process of abstraction. In English, both *this* and *that* can be used to realize this, whether as determiners or as pronouns. The question is, what kind of process of abstraction is involved? The purpose of this paper is to answer this question by using the theoretical framework of Cognitive Lexical Semantics. It will be argued that underlying the different uses of *this* and *that* is a metaphorical understanding of discourse space that exists in English.

Before I go into a discussion of the theoretical framework, I will first summarize the different uses of *this* and *that* in the next section.

2. The Many Uses of *This* and *That*

The wide variety in the use of *this* and *that* as discourse deictic markers has been a topic of study by many linguists. A literature review of the studies would be a major undertaking. Fortunately, Niimura (2003) gives a comprehensive summary of such past studies in his PhD thesis, “Contrastive Analysis of Japanese and English Demonstratives: Differences in Speaker Stance” and I am taking the liberty of using his study as a basis for this section. I have taken examples and quotes in his thesis, and arranged them to fit the headings that are my own. In his thesis, Niimura (2003: 73) claims that the speaker’s choice of *this* or *that* is made on the basis of a ‘subjective perception of the referent and the context’. In this paper, I am taking Niimura’s research one step further to explain the relation between the speaker’s subjective way of viewing the referent and the basic function of *this* and *that* as expressions to locate an entity in physical space.

2.1 *This* Used to Express Vividness of What is on the Speaker’s Mind

Lakoff (1974) points out that in colloquial style, the form *this* can replace the indefinite article *a* to create vividness in narratives, involving the hearer more fully in the narrative, as in examples (6) and (7). Quirk et al (1972: 217–8) also note this point and give example (8). Example (9) is taken from Strauss (1993), who points out that when the indefinite article *a* is substituted with *this*, it draws the hearer’s attention to the noun referents more vividly, enhancing the impact of the story.

(6) There was *this* traveling salesman, and he···” (Lakoff 1974: 347)

(7) He kissed her with *this* unbelievable passion. (Lakoff 1974: 347)

(8) Well, I'll tell you a story. There was *this/*that* inventor... (Quirk et al. 1972: 217-8)

(9) ...we had this orgy en- en:d u::m: up in the-um twelfth floo:r, we were on *this* water be:d
...if it wasn't 'n orgy it was gonna be one. we were a:ll dru:nk, en stoned out of our heads.
And-I moved one way, en *th*'s girl Debbie, moved the other way, =and her hand wen' right up
intuh my face 'n hit me in the eye=, hhh All *this* blood started gushing down my face...
(Strauss 1993: 34)

2.2 *This/That* Used to Indicate the Speaker's Involvement

This and *that* are also used to point to entities that the speaker feels emotionally close to or distant from. Quirk et al. (1972: 217-8) write 'that the near/distant polarity can be extended [...] to emotive implications such as interest and familiarity (associated with *this*), and dislike or disapproval (associated with *that*).' Thus, in the following example where the speaker is expressing disapproval towards "his manners", the speaker must use *that*.

(10) *That/*This* which upsets me most is his manners. (Quirk et al. 1972: 217-8)

Lakoff (1974) makes a similar point using the following example where the form *this* is used to express psychological proximity.

(11) I see there's going to be peace in the mideast. *This* Henry Kissinger really is something!
(Lakoff 1974: 346)

2.3 *This* Used to Mark Focus of Attention

Linde (1979) who did a discourse-based study on demonstratives, proposed the notion of 'focus of attention' as a motivating factor for the choice between *it* and *that*. Strauss (1993) develops this notion further and explains that the difference in focus means different degrees of attention that the speaker wants the hearer to pay attention to the referent. In Strauss' schema, the high-focus form *this* informs the hearer to pay utmost attention to the referent. Niimura (2003) supports this claim and writes that *this* is a high focus form and *that* is a mid focus form (and *it* is a low focus form). Adding a slight variation on the same point, McCarthy (1994: 272) writes that anaphoric *it* carries on the current focus, while *this* signals 'a shift of

entity or focus of attention to a new focus'. In (13), the focus of attention has shifted from “the brain” to “the brain stem”, and *this* refers to the new focus.

(12) Coming out from the base of the brain like a stalk is the brain stem. *This* is the swollen top of the spinal cord, which runs down to our ‘tail’. (McCarthy 1994: 272)

That, according to McCarthy (1994: 274), ‘refers across from the current focus to entities or foci that are non-current, non-central, marginalisable or other-attributed’. In (13), the current focus is “a one-day conference” and *that* refers to a non-current, non-central focus, “final ‘composite’ motions are prepared”.

(13) So there will be a one-day conference in London some five or six weeks before a full conference begins, at which final ‘composite’ motions are prepared. If *that* is done, say party manager, it will be possible to allocate more time to debates, and therefore to lengthen the time limit for speeches from the rostrum. (McCarthy 1994: 269)

2.4 *This* to Mark What the Speaker Said and *That* to Mark What the Hearer Said

Although not explicitly stated in Niimura (2003), *that* is used to mark what the hearer said. We saw earlier in Halliday and Hasan’s (1976: 66) example that in B’s utterance, *that* refers to the total event of their breaking of the vase mentioned by A. Here, B cannot replace *that* with *this* to refer to what is uttered by A.

(5) A: They broke a Chinese vase.

B: *That* was careless. (Halliday & Hasan 1976: 66)

Examples (14) and (15) also show the use of *that* to refer to entities uttered by the hearer.

(14) A: Harold Wilson has just resigned.

B: Who told you *that*? (Lyons 1979: 96)

(15) *That* was the funniest story I’ve ever heard. (Levinson 1983: 85)

2.5 *That* to Mark What is Shared by the Speaker and Hearer

As mentioned in 2.4, *that* is used to refer to entities mentioned by the hearer and is not normally used to refer to entities that the speaker brings up in the conversation. If, however, the speaker feels that the referent is, to some extent, shared knowledge, i.e., information shared by the participants of the conversation, he/she can use *that* to indicate a comradeship between the speaker and the hearer.

In the following example from Strauss (1993: 29), the caller refers to the entity “man”, first by the indefinite article, “a man” and secondly by “*this* man” after the entity has become shared information. Strauss (1993) writes that the form *that* can function to indicate a greater degree of solidarity and shared information among the participants of the conversation.

- (16) Caller: You spoke a little while ago to *a* man. hhh with regard to uh law, //an’ murder.
Crandall: Yes ma’am ...
Caller: ...you were talking about, or he was anyway, //that man, of killing someone, by, an-a specific dee::duh, described in the law of the sovereign state in which you live, as being unjustified. (Strauss 1993: 29)

Lakoff (1974) makes a similar point and writes that the form *that* establishes solidarity and implies shared emotions. The following example is taken from Lakoff (1974) and is an utterance of a doctor to a patient.

- (17) How’s *that* throat? (Lakoff 1974: 346)

2.6 Factors That Influence the Speaker’s Choice of Demonstratives

To summarize, the factors that influence the speaker’s choice of demonstratives in English are (a) entities that are on the speaker’s mind that he/she wants to describe vividly; (b) the speaker’s emotional feeling towards the referent; (c) entities that the speaker wants to focus on in the conversation; (d) the utterer of the referent; and (e) the speaker’s expression of comradeship with the hearer regarding the referent.

In the next section, I will present the theoretical framework used to explain the link between the above uses of *this* and *that* and their basic use as pointers of entities in physical

space.

3. Theoretical Framework

The theory of Cognitive Lexical Semantics was built upon Lakoff's work on categorization and Idealized Cognitive Models and later developed by Brugman and others (cf. Vyvyan Evans and Andrea Tyler's theory of Principled Polysemy 2004). Advocates of the theory take the position that lexical items are conceptual categories. That is, a word represents a category of distinct, yet related meanings that exhibit prototype effects.

3.1 Words as Categories

The idea of a prototype structure was presented by cognitive psychologist Eleanor Rosch and her colleagues in the 1970s. What Rosch proposed in her early work was that people categorized knowledge using a prototype that is a schematic representation of the salient characteristics associated with members of the category in question (cf. Rosch 1973). Rosch's proposal was radically different from the classical theory of categorization where category membership was said to be determined by virtue of fulfilling a set of necessary sufficient conditions. Lakoff's (1987) insight was in conceiving linguistic categories (such as words) as having similar structures to those defined by Rosch. Developing upon Rosch's findings, Lakoff argues that categories relate to what he calls Idealized Cognitive Models. These are relatively stable mental representations of our knowledge of the world related to a particular concept. They are like a background frame against which we understand a word. Whether the usage of the word is a typical one or not is determined by virtue of how its use fits in with the Idealized Cognitive Model. The variants in the use of the word are extended by convention from its central model and must be learned one by one. But the extensions are by no means random. As Lakoff (1987) states, 'The central model determines the possibilities for extensions, together with the possible relations between the central model and the extension models'.

What I will argue is that the central model for the demonstratives *this* and *that* is their use as locating an entity in physical space and that this determines the possible extended uses. One way in which the non-central case can extend from the central case is by way of metaphor. In order to explain how metaphors are used to extend the use of *this* and *that*, I must first present the theory of Conceptual Metaphors. This will be done in the next section.

3.2 Conceptual Metaphors

Conceptual Metaphor Theory was one of the earliest theoretical frameworks identified as part of the theory of Cognitive Lexical Semantics. This framework was first proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) in their influential book, “Metaphors We Live By”. The basic premise of Conceptual Metaphor Theory is that metaphor is not simply a stylistic feature of language, but that thought itself is fundamentally metaphorical in nature. According to this view, conceptual structure is organized according to correspondences between conceptual domains. Some of these mappings are based on embodied experiences while others are built on these experiences to form more complex conceptual structures. For example, we think and talk about TIME in terms of SPACE and MOTION. In the following examples taken from Evans and Green (2006), the conceptual domain of TIME is mapped onto the conceptual domains of SPACE and MOTION.

(18) Christmas is *approaching*.

(19) We're *moving towards* Christmas.

(20) Christmas is not very *far away*.

What makes the above examples a metaphor is the conventional association of the TIME domain with the domains of SPACE and MOTION. The examples are also examples of a ‘conceptual’ metaphor because the reason why we talk about TIME in terms of SPACE or in terms of MOTION is because we ‘conceptualize’ TIME in this way. That is, the linguistic expressions are motivated by our concept of TIME.

3.3 Cognitive Lexical Semantics

Using the above ideas underpinning the cognitive lexical semantics approach, we can say that a lexical item such as *this* and *that* constitutes a conceptual category of distinct but related senses. Furthermore, these senses, as part of a single category, can be judged as more prototypical or less prototypical. The idea that the less prototypical senses are derived metaphorically from the more prototypical meanings of *this* and *that* taken from Cognitive Lexical Semantics will be the basis for the following exploration of the different uses of *this* and *that*.

4. Discourse Deictic Markers *This* and *That*

At this point, we are ready to discuss the various uses of *this* and *that* against the background of Cognitive Lexical Semantics. The prototypical usage of the demonstratives *this* and *that* is that of locating an entity in a given place. *This* is used to point at an entity that is near the speaker, while *that* is used to point at an entity that is distant from the speaker (and perhaps close to the hearer). I will show that the categories of the demonstratives *this* and *that* are categories centered around this prototype and that the extended uses of the two demonstratives relate to the prototype by way of metaphor. The two basic conceptual metaphors underlying the use of *this* and *that* as discourse deictic markers are:

DISCOURSE SPACE IS PHYSICAL SPACE

DISCOURSE ELEMENTS ARE ENTITIES

These two conceptual metaphors appear in Lakoff's (1987) analysis of the *There*-construction. Like *this* and *that*, *there* can also be used as a discourse deictic. In the following example taken from Lakoff (1987: 517), the speaker is commenting on something that someone else has said.

(21) Now *there's* a good point. (Lakoff 1987: 517)

Lakoff writes that the conceptual metaphors DISCOURSE SPACE IS PHYSICAL SPACE and DISCOURSE ELEMENTS ARE ENTITIES are the basis of the use of *there* in (21) as well as of expressions such as the following, used to refer to elements in the discourse or to discourse space.

(22) Here comes the best part.

(23) I'm lost.

(24) Where are we?

(25) Can we go back to your last point? (Lakoff 1987: 517)

Using Lakoff's argument, we can also say that the use of the demonstratives *this* and *that* to refer to entities in a discourse is based on the same conceptual metaphors. The only difference is that by using *there*, the speaker is directing the hearer's attention to a location in

the discourse space, whereas the use of *this* and *that* directs the hearer's attention to an entity in discourse space. We can say that the use of *this* and *that* as a discourse deictic is linked to its prototype by way of the above two metaphors.

5. Proximal *This* and Distal *That*

Once we have established that in English, elements in the discourse are talked about as if they existed in physical space, the next question is explaining the variation within the use of *this* and *that* as discourse deictic markers. In the prototypical model of *this* and *that*, *this* is used to point to an entity close to the speaker in physical space whereas *that* is used to point to an entity distant from the speaker in physical space. Here we must examine what concepts are associated with physical closeness.

5.1 Discourse Elements in the Speaker and Hearer's Physical Space

The examples we have seen in sections 2.1 and 2.2 seem to suggest that a discourse element that the speaker considers to be close to him/her in physical space is what the speaker is psychologically involved in. A discourse element that the speaker considers to be distant seems to be that which he/she feels a psychological distance. The conceptual metaphor that can be said to be the basis of the examples discussed in sections 2.1 and 2.2 are the following.

PSYCHOLOGICAL INVOLVEMENT IS PHYSICAL CLOSENESS

PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTANCE IS PHYSICAL DISTANCE

Let us first look at the conceptual metaphor PSYCHOLOGICAL INVOLVEMENT IS PHYSICAL CLOSENESS. I again turn to Lakoff (1987) to provide support. Lakoff discusses the idiom.

(26) to keep someone at arm's length

He points out that the meaning of the idiom is motivated by two metaphors that provide the link between the image associated with the idiom and its meaning. The two metaphors are

INTIMACY IS PHYSICAL CLOSENESS

SOCIAL (OR PSYCHOLOGICAL) HARM IS PHYSICAL HARM

He writes that keeping someone at arm's length physically is keeping him from getting physically close, and thereby protecting oneself from physical harm. The metaphors map this knowledge onto the meaning of the idiom, which is 'to keep someone from becoming intimate, so as to protect oneself from social or psychological harm'.

In a similar manner, I propose the following conceptual metaphor to provide a link between the image associated with the demonstrative *this* and *that* and their extended usages.

PSYCHOLOGICAL INVOLVEMENT IS PHYSICAL CLOSENESS

PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTANCE IS PHYSICAL DISTANCE

Just as we tend to get physically close to someone that we are intimate with, we tend to get physically close to entities that we are psychologically involved with. On the other hand, when we do not want to be psychologically involved with something, we tend to describe it in terms of physical distance. Below are some examples.

(27) She is a *close* friend.

(28) I'm *into* computer games.

(29) He's very *attached* to his car.

(30) I don't want to go *near* her.

(31) Stay *away* from that man!

(32) It's better to keep a *distance* from him.

Using the conceptual metaphors introduced above, I will explain the extended uses of the demonstratives *this* and *that* presented in sections 2.1 and 2.2.

5.2 Psychological Proximity

A speaker can be psychologically involved with the referent of the discourse deictic *this* in several ways. First, the pointed entity can be something that the speaker has had direct experience with and therefore has a vivid image of it in his/her mind. Examples (6)–(9) seem to be of this kind. Here, we can say that the speaker is using the proximal *this* to express an entity that appears immediately and vividly in his mind due to the psychological involvement he/she has with the entity.

(6) There was *this* traveling salesman, and he …” (Lakoff 1974: 347)

(7) He kissed her with *this* unbelievable passion. (Lakoff 1974: 347)

(8) Well, I'll tell you a story. There was *this/*that* inventor … (Quirk et al. 1972: 217-8)

(9) …we had this orgy en- en:d u::m: up in the -um twelfth floo:r, we were on *this* water be:d
…if it wasn't 'n orgy it was gonna be one. we were a:ll dru:nk, en stoned out of our heads.
And- I moved one way, en *th*'s girl Debbie, moved the other way, =and her hand wen' right up
intuh my face 'n hit me in the eye=,hhh All *this* blood started gushing down my face …
(Strauss 1993: 34)

Another way in which the speaker can be involved with the pointed entity is by empathizing with its referent. In example (11), the speaker chooses the proximal *this* to indicate his/her emotional involvement with the pointed entity.

(11) I see there's going to be peace in the mideast. *This* Henry Kissinger really is something!
(Lakoff 1974: 346)

On the other hand, the reason why *this* is unacceptable in (10) is because from the rest of the sentence, one can assume that the speaker wants to disassociate him/herself with the referent of the discourse deictic.

(10) *That/*This* which upsets me most is his manners. (Quirk et al. 1972: 217-8)

The conceptual metaphors DISCOURSE SPACE IS PHYSICAL SPACE, DISCOURSE ELEMENTS ARE ENTITIES in combination with the conceptual metaphors PSYCHOLOGICAL INVOLVEMENT IS PHYSICAL CLOSENESS, PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTANCE IS PHYSICAL DISTANCE link the above uses of the demonstratives *this* and *that* to their prototypical uses.

5.3 Topic Elements in Proximal Space

Since discourse elements are talked about as if they were entities in physical space, it is possible that the speaker may want to draw the hearer's attention to some of those entities. If we employ the conceptual metaphor PSYCHOLOGICAL INVOLVEMENT IS PHYSICAL

CLOSENESS introduced in the previous section, we can also explain why the speaker refers to an element that he/she is focusing on, by the proximal *this* and refer to what he/she is focusing less on by the distal *that*. In (12), the speaker is psychologically more involved in the entity referred to by *this* than any other entity in his/her utterance. On the other hand, in (13), the speaker is psychologically less involved in the entity that is referred to by the distal *that* and is more involved in what follows.

(12) Coming out from the base of the brain like a stalk is the brain stem. *This* is the swollen top of the spinal cord, which runs down to our 'tail'. (McCarthy 1994: 272)

(13) So there will be a one-day conference in London some five or six weeks before a full conference begins, at which final 'composite' motions are prepared. If *that* is done, say party manager, it will be possible to allocate more time to debates, and therefore to lengthen the time limit for speeches from the rostrum. (McCarthy 1994: 269)

Thus, use of discourse deictic *this* and *that* to indicate what the speaker is focusing on or is not focusing on can be linked to their prototypes by the conceptual metaphors DISCOURSE SPACE IS PHYSICAL SPACE, DISCOURSE ELEMENTS ARE ENTITIES in combination with the conceptual metaphors PSYCHOLOGICAL INVOLVEMENT IS PHYSICAL CLOSENESS, PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTANCE IS PHYSICAL DISTANCE.

5.4 Speaker's Space and Hearer's Space

In the previous sections we established that elements in the discourse are talked about as if they were entities in physical space. The speaker can point to elements he/she has introduced to the discourse space by *this* or *that* depending on his/her psychological involvement with the entity. The examples we have examined in sections 5.2 and 5.3 were distinctions in the use of *this* and *that* made by the speaker in referring to discourse elements within his/her own discourse. In this section, we examine examples from sections 2.4 and 2.5 to consider how discourse space between the speaker and the hearer is divided.

When the speaker is referring to discourse elements introduced to the discourse space by the hearer, those entities are considered to be in the physical space close to the hearer and away from the speaker. This is why the distal deictic marker *that* is used in examples (14) and (15).

(14) A: Harold Wilson has just resigned.

B: Who told you *that*? (Lyons 1979: 96)

(15) *That* was the funniest story I've ever heard. (Levinson 1983: 85)

However, the speaker can sometimes point to a new entity in the discourse space as if it were something that has already been mentioned by the hearer (even though it has not been mentioned by the hearer). The speaker can do this if he/she knows that the hearer can identify immediately what the referent of the deictic is. By pointing to an entity as if it were something mentioned by the hearer, the speaker establishes a link between the him/herself and the hearer. This, I think, explains why the use of *that* in examples (16) and (17) expresses a feeling of camaraderie or solidarity expressed by the speaker to the hearer.

(16) Caller: You spoke a little while ago to *a* man. hhh with regard to uh law, //an' murder.

Crandall: Yes ma'am...

Caller: ...you were talking about, or he was anyway, //that man, of killing someone, by, an- a specific dee::duh, described in the law of the sovereign state in which you live, as being unjustified.

(17) How's *that* throat? (Lakoff 1974: 346)

Here, again, the conceptual metaphors DISCOURSE SPACE IS PHYSICAL SPACE and DISCOURSE ELEMENTS ARE ENTITIES link the extended uses of *this* and *that* to their prototypes. Discourse elements that are considered by the speaker to be entities in the physical space near the hearer are those elements that the hearer has introduced to the discourse space. In addition, discourse elements that the speaker thinks are easily identified by the hearer are presented as if they were entities in the physical space near the hearer. By doing so, the speaker expresses a feeling of camaraderie with the hearer.

6. Conclusion

I have presented four conceptual metaphors to explain the link between the prototypical usages of the demonstratives *this* and *that* to their usages as discourse deictic markers. The prototypical usages of the demonstratives *this* and *that* are their usages as expressions to

point to objects that exist in the physical space of the participants of a conversation. The four conceptual metaphors that provide the link are DISCOURSE SPACE IS PHYSICAL SPACE, DISCOURSE ELEMENTS ARE ENTITIES, PSYCHOLOGICAL INVOLVEMENT IS PHYSICAL CLOSENESS, and PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTANCE IS PHYSICAL DISTANCE. These conceptual metaphors form the way in which English speakers conceptualize discourse space, discourse elements and psychological involvement. Because English speakers conceptualize discourse space as if it were physical space, and because they conceptualize discourse elements as if they were entities in physical space, they use the same demonstratives to point to discourse elements in discourse space as the demonstratives they use to point to entities in physical space. Also, because English speakers conceptualize psychological involvement as physical closeness, they refer to entities that they are psychologically involved in as if they were physically close to that entity. These conceptualizations are expressed linguistically in their use of the English demonstratives *this* and *that*. Some of these conceptualizations exist only in the English speaking community and the link between the various usages of the two demonstratives is not always obvious to people outside the community. The present paper is an attempt to make clear the underlying conceptualizations of discourse space and psychological proximity/distance that motivates the use of demonstratives by speakers of English.

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