



## Demonstrative Patterns in English and Ibibio

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### Abstract

This paper provides a descriptive analysis of demonstrative pronouns in English and Ibibio. The data for the analysis of demonstratives in Ibibio were drawn from central Ibibio by elicitation. The paper argues, based on the syntactic operations of demonstratives in the two languages that demonstratives in Ibibio consist of a three-way opposition while those of English consist of a two-way opposition. It states that demonstratives in English inflect for person and number while those in Ibibio do not. It further establishes that Ibibio has two classes of demonstratives, with each class being syntactically different from the other. It asserts that demonstratives in the two languages also function as the subject and determiner while some demonstratives in Ibibio may function as articles as well as perform the function of a verb, properties which are not found in English.

**Key words:** demonstrative, head, specifier, determiner, Ibibio

### Introduction

Language is a system of structures. Even when the structures are similar like the SVO sentence structure which characterises English and Ibibio, there are still divergences in the different constituents which make up a particular syntactic unit like the subject or NP. English and Ibibio have determiners and also possess similar determiner markers which are demonstratives, articles and so on. However, the determiners in the two languages do not occur in the same way as they occur in different syntactic environments. Demonstratives refer to words like this, that, these and those which specify a location which is relatively nearer to or further from the speaker by

expressing near and distant meaning as well as indicate number contrast (Radford, 1997, 2004; Leech & Svartvik, 2013). They function as pronouns by performing the duty of a full noun phrase (NP) (Ndimele, 1996, 1999, Aarts, 2008; Quirk & Greenbaum, 1973) and also function as determiners (DET) by specifying “the range of reference of a noun by showing definiteness, indefiniteness and by indicating quantity” (Leech & Svartvik, 2013, p. 281). According to them, demonstratives do not occupy the same position as other classes of determiners, but occur in “different positions relative to one another.” Tomori (1977) refers to demonstratives as items which co-occur with nouns to form noun phrases. Demonstratives are therefore a class of words which occur together with nouns, and in addition, express some semantic notions because they limit the meaning application of the noun in the positions they occupy.

In X-bar syntax, demonstratives are specifiers of the head. A specifier, abbreviated as Spec, refers to any category which is the daughter of a maximal projection and the sister of one bar projection, and in some instances delimits the range of application of the maximal projection which is the double bar (Trask, 1993). A specifier usually relates to the head as the dependent of the head where it draws its meaning as well as delimits the information conveyed by the head. Demonstrative is one of the specifiers of the head. The Specifier (demonstrative in this case) occurs together with the head to form an NP. Articles, quantifiers, numerals, demonstratives, etc. belong to the class of determiners and serve as complement of the head. According to Abney (1987) cited in Radford (2004), any phrasal category headed by a determiner is a determiner phrase while the item which sub-classifies it, that is, specifies it is its complement.

In the Minimalist Program, demonstratives can co-occur with a noun to form a determiner phrase (DP). Anyanwu, (2010) in the discussion of Specifier-Noun relations in Ngwa Igbo shows that demonstratives can function as specifiers in Igbo language and indicates that specifiers may occur in pre-position and post-position to the head in the language. Those that occur in pre-position are labelled Pre-N-Spec while those that occur after the head, that is, in post-position are labelled Post-N-Spec. This work investigates demonstratives in Ibibio, their syntactic and semantic behaviour in relation to those of English.

## **2. Demonstrative Paradigms in English and Ibibio**

This section presents demonstratives in English and Ibibio and their syntactic and semantic behaviours by showing how they resemble and differ from

each other with the whole essence of enriching the discourse on pronouns and determiners in Ibibio as well as giving further insight on the grammar of the Ibibio language. The discussion establishes the nature of demonstratives in Ibibio, a grammatical unit not widely discussed as compared to their English counterpart as may be gleaned from the works of Essien (1990), Radford (2004) and Aarts (2008).

### **2.1 Demonstrative Paradigms in English**

Demonstratives belong to the lexical category of pronouns and behave in different ways. Pronouns are substitutes for nouns as they occur in the same syntactic environment where nouns and noun phrases do (Ndimele, 1996). Pronouns express meaning relationships with other words in the structure of a sentence and can change their forms to mark the grammatical categories of number, person, gender and case (Josiah, 2013). Apart from occurring as noun phrase substitutes, pronouns also refer to an entity in which the discourse participants presumably know (Fromkin, Rodman, Hyam & Hummel, 2006). Classified as pronouns are personal, reflexive, relative, interrogative, indefinite and demonstrative pronouns. The following table presents demonstratives in English, their number reference and semantic interpretation:

**Table 1: Demonstrative Paradigms in English**

<b>Demonstrative</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Position</b>
this	singular	proximal
that	singular	distal
these	plural	Proximal
those	Plural	Distal

Table 1 indicates that in deictic terms *this* makes reference to an entity in close proximity to the speaker and away from the listener while *that* makes reference to an entity which is somewhat far away from both the speaker and the hearer (Radford, 2004) as in the following examples:

1(a) *This* man is not serious.

(b) *That* man is not serious.

The table also indicates that demonstratives in English inflect for number as *this/these* as well as *that/those* show. While *this* and *that* point out one entity, *these* and *those* point out more than one entity by changing from singular to plural as in:

2(a) *This* boy is my friend.

(b) These boys are my friends.

3(a) *That* man is in love.

(b) Those men are in love.

*These* and *those* points out two or more entities while the former points out entities which are relatively nearer to the speaker, the latter points out entities relatively further away from the speaker (Radford, 1997). However, the length of distance between the speaker and the listener is not morphologically specified in English this is the case in Ibibio. Semantically, *this*, *these*, *that* and *those* make reference to entities in relation to definiteness (Leech & Svartvik, 2013). These demonstratives come before the nouns they specify as in the following tree configuration:

DP

Fig. 1: D this man  
 those men                      noun specifier in English

**2.2 Demonstrative Paradigms in Ibibio**

The syntactic category of pronouns in Ibibio, like its English counterpart, replaces nouns and noun phrases. Pronouns may occur as subject or object and perform other syntactic functions that NPs do in Ibibio. They may occur as anaphoric elements and may function as nominal modifiers as their English counterparts. Essien adds that nominal modifiers in Ibibio include determiners, quantifiers, numerals and adjectives. He also states that indefinite or unspecified NPs (noun phrases) in the language subcategorise a determiner and when it is very necessary to make the reference definite or easy to identify, a determiner is used. Essien (1990) includes deictic categories in the class of determiners in Ibibio language but is silent on demonstrative pronouns. It is the combination of nouns together with the modifiers which forms the lexical category of NP (noun phrase). Demonstratives in Ibibio often occupy a syntactic position after the noun they specify in that they co-occur with nouns. They may also occur as surrogate nouns. The following table shows demonstratives in Ibibio:

**Table II: Demonstrative Pronouns in Ibibio**

Word	Gloss	Position
Ámì	this	proximal
ódò	that	distal
Ókò	that	distal (yonder)

The table gives the three demonstrative pronouns in Ibibio. They are semantically proximal or distal; proximal when they specify a location which is relatively nearer to the speaker and distal when the location is relatively further from the speaker. Ámì ‘this’ which occurs in free variation with ‘émi’

used by Essien (1990) points out an entity which is nearer to the speaker as the following examples show:

4(a) Òfòńń ámì ówàkká. 'This cloth has torn'

Clothe this torn

(b) Mmóńń ámì ásáná. 'This water is clean'

Water this clean

ó

In addition, *Ámì* does not inflect for number as 'this' does in English but can co-occur with a plural noun. In this circumstance, it is only the noun head which indicates number contrast as in the following:

5(a) Áyín ámì átúá. 'This child is crying'

Child this sg+cry

(b) NńńÀḍitò ámì ètúá. 'These children are crying'

Children this pl+cry

From the examples, there is no number agreement between the subject and the demonstrative as it is in English in which '*this child*' and '*these children*' show an agreement between the demonstrative and the noun which it specifies. Number agreement in *Ibibio* is between the nominal element and the verb while the demonstrative is uninflected. *Áyín – átúá* (5a) shows concordial relation between singular subject and singular verb while *ńńitò – ètúá* (5b) expresses plural subject agreeing with the plural verb respectively. The noun head *Áyín* in (5a) inflects to *ńńitò* in (6b) by suppletion while the verb inflects from *átúá* to *ètúá* in order to satisfy agreement principle in natural languages that a verb agrees with its subject both in person and number (Eka, 1994, Ndimele, 1999, Josiah, 2013). In each case, *ami* has not inflected. *Túá* is the root verb while *à-* and *è-* are concord markers since *Ibibio* principally mark concord by affixation.

When *ámì* occurs with another determiner like a numeral, the numeral precedes it in the sequence of noun followed by numeral plus the demonstrative as in:

6(a) Ùsàn itá ámì ébòòmó. 'These three plates are broken'

Plate three this pl+broken .

When a numeral occurs with the head noun in *Ibibio*, it is the numeral which specifies the number while the demonstrative is uninflected and it occurs in a position after the head whereas in English numeral occurs in pre-position as in "these three plates". In a sequence of nominal head + numeral + demonstrative, the nominal head can be deleted in context in which both the speaker and the listener share a common knowledge of the referent as in "*itá*

*ámì ébòòmó*". Expression of this sort is ungrammatical in English but completely grammatical in Ibibio language.

*Ámì* can also function as the subject of the sentence as in the following:

7(a) *Ámì òfòn óbóhó.* 'This is very good.'

This good very

*Ámì* functions as a deictic category by pointing out specific entities with definite reference and the point the entity is located as close to the speaker:

The next demonstrative category in Ibibio is *ódò* which is equivalent to *that* in English. It functions include indicating nearness to the listener and some distance away from the speaker; definite reference and reference to an entity mentioned previously:

8(a) *Kóm Mmá ódò.* 'Greet that woman.'

greet woman that

(b) *Èté ódò údí.* 'That man has come.'

Man that has come

8(a) points out that the woman is some distance away from the speaker but near the listener while (8b) specifies a man whose existence is known to both the speaker and the listener in the context of a previous discussion. As it is with *ámì*, *ódò* occurs as complement of the head noun.

In addition, *ódò* can be used for impersonal reference as its English counterpart as in:

9. *Mkpó ódò ífónnó.* 'That thing is not good.'

thing that neg+good

*Ódò* is the complement of *mkpó* 'thing' and does not specify a particular thing being referred to which the speaker does not like.

*Ódò* can function both as subject of the sentence and the verb "to be" (Essien, 1990):

10(a) *Ódò ódò ákpáníkò.* 'That is true'

That is true

(b) *Mmá ókò ódò ìnó.* 'That woman is a thief'

Woman that is thief.

In (10a), in the first occurrence *ódò* functions as the subject while in the second occurrence, it is the verb "to be". In (10b) *ódò* functions as a verb whereas no demonstrative functions as a verbal element in English.

*Ódò* can serve as an anaphoric element by specifying antecedent relation in which it is the word the pronoun refers back to as in:

11. Úsén ódò ké ñkékíd ànyé.

day that that I saw him 'It was that day that I saw him.'

It signifies that it was some definite time in the past and that it was precisely on a specific day, so the reference is to that very day.

*Just as it is with ámì*, ódò does not inflect for number and person. It is only the noun head which it specifies which changes its morphological shape and takes a plural affix, specifically, a prefix:

12(a) Akpàráwà ódò ádí.

pl+ young man the/that has come  
'That/The young man has come.'

(b) Mkpàráwà ódò édí.

pl+young men that have come  
'Those/The young men have come.'

The singular subject *àkpàráwà* 'young man' in (12a) agrees with the singular present perfective verb *ádí* 'has come' while in (12b) the plural subject '*mkpàráwà*' agrees with the plural present perfective verb *edí*. *M-* is the 3rd person plural affix marker. The verb has inflected from *ádí* with *á-* as the singular concord marker to *edí*, with *é-* as the plural concord marker. In *Ibibio*, plural can be formed through affixation and suppletion.

*Ódò* can also function as an article by pointing out the noun referent as demonstrated in (12) and indicate definite reference by giving specific sense to the noun it occurs with. It also conveys the semantic notion of previous mention where the interlocutors share a common knowledge.

Start here

*Ókò*, the third demonstrative pronoun in *Ibibio* indicates distance further away from both the speaker and the listener and also functions as a deictic category, a category which is not morphologically marked in English. For example:

13(a) Mmá ókò ósón íwùód.

Sg+Woman that pl+strong head  
'That woman is headstrong/stubborn.'

(b) Ibáán ókò ésón íwùód

Pl +women those are strong head.  
'Those women are stubborn.'

Just as it is with *ámì* and *ódò*, *ókò* specifies the head by pointing out the particular entity referred to. In the examples, the referents are far away from both the speaker and the listener and only the subject of the sentence and the verb which inflect for person and number while *ókò* does not. It is not as versatile as *ódò*.

### 2.2.1 Type 2 Demonstratives in Ibibio

We earlier observed that demonstratives in Ibibio do not inflect for person and number. However, there is a small group of words – just two in number, *àdà* and *mmon*, which checks the seeming impoverishment in number contrast among demonstratives in Ibibio. *Àdà* is morphologically equivalent to *this* while *mmon* is morphologically equivalent to *these* in English. They specify number contrast.

Quirk & Greenbaum (1973) and Radford (2004) observe that demonstratives share the same notion of near and distant reference with the pairs here/there as well as now/then and also convey the sense of relative immediacy and relative remoteness in English. The equivalent forms of these words in Ibibio are *mmí*, *ndò* and *ñkó* presented in Table 3:

**Table 3:**

Word	Gloss	Position
Mmí	here	near the speaker
ndò	there	near the listener
ñkò	There	there far from the speaker and the listener

*Mmí*, *ndò* and *ñkó* which are derived structures are deictic categories in the language in the same way that *ámì*, *ódò* and *ókò* are by indicating a three way opposition and signaling near and different levels of distant reference as in:

14(a) *Dá ké mmí . ‘Stand here.’*  
Stand by here

(b) *Dá ké ndò ‘Stand there’ far off.*  
Stand by there

(c) *Dá ké ñkó. ‘Stand there’ very far off.*  
Stand by there ‘yonder’

*Mmí* ‘here’ refers to the reference point near the speaker, *ndò* ‘there’ refers to the reference point near the listener but far from the speaker while *ñko* ‘there but yonder’ locates a point far away from both the speaker and the

listener. They can function as subject of the sentence by referring to understood entities as in:

15(a) *Mmí émi ké mbó.* 'It is this place I am referring to'.

(b) *Ndó ódò ké mbó.* 'It is that place I am referring to' and

(c) *Nkó ókò ké mbó.* 'It is that place (farther from you the listener) that I am referring to.'

The bound morpheme *à* is sometimes attached to these lexical items for topicalisation, emphasis and intensification of meaning as follows:

16(a) *Ámmí* 'This one here near the speaker'

(b) *Andò* 'That one there near the listener'

(c) *Añkò* 'That one there away from the speaker/listener'

They are derived structures and particularly point out definite referents. Interestingly, these deictic markers together with *mmí*, *ndò* and *ñkó* may act as surrogate nouns when both the speaker and the listener know what the head noun is in the context of an utterance (Essien, 1990).

*Àdà* and *mmon* co-occur with the locative demonstratives (*mmí/ndò/ñkó*) to indicate plural and make definite reference as well as function as determiners and deictic markers:

17(a) *Àdà mmí.* 'This one here.'

this here

(b) *Mmon mmí.* 'These ones here.'

these here

18(a) *Àdà . ndò* 'That one there.'

that there

(b) *Mmon ndò* 'Those ones there.'

those there

19(a) *Àdà ñkó.* 'Those ones there.'

that there yonder

(b) *Mmon ñkó* 'Those ones there yonder.'

those there

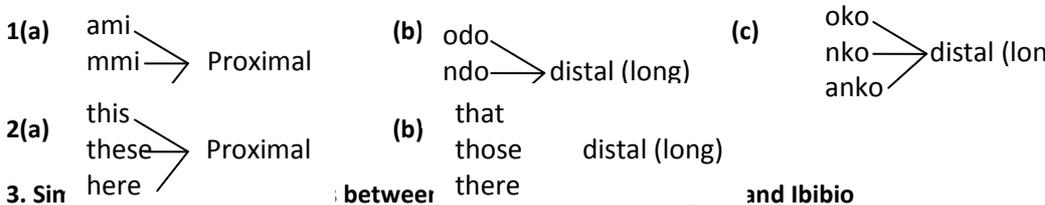
It is necessary to observe that *mmí*, *ndò* and *ñkó* also function as noun substitutes in that they are morphologically demonstratives but syntactically complements. The free morphemes *àdà/mmon* co-occurs with Type 1 demonstratives (*ámi/ódò/ókò*) to specify number distinctly both lexically and syntactically. *Àdà /mmon* indicate both the number and the point of reference which Type 1 could not. *Mmí* specifies the entity referred to as one (singular) and the location as being in close proximity to the speaker; *mmon mmí* shows the number of the referent as more than one and somewhat close to the speaker. *Àdà ndò* specifies the entity as singular in

number while *Mmon ndò* indicates the entities to be plural; in terms of location, the two make reference to a distance which is far from the speaker and close to the hearer. For *Àdà ñkó* and *Mmon ñkó*, they also convey the sense of nearness and furtherness as well as show the number of referent as a single entity or more than one respectively. While the former is used in the singular sense, the former is used in the plural sense, but semantically make third party reference.

In sum, *àdà mmí*, *àdà ndò* and *àdà ñkó* make reference to one entity in whatever distance, whether near or far while *mmon mmí*, *mmon ndò* and *mmon ñkó* make reference to more than one entity whether near or further away. The three types of deictic patterns discussed are drawn from the same roots – *ámì*, *ódò* and *ókò*. This is not the case with English deictic markers.

Type 2 demonstratives are equivalent to what Radford (2004) describes as Q-pronouns, the class of pronouns which functions as determiners. In Ibibio, they can function as surrogate noun and as well occur with the head as in: “*Mmoto mmon mmí*” meaning “these motors”. One fact about this class of demonstratives is that their referents are definite and specific and most importantly intensify meaning.

The demonstratives and the deictic markers in English and Ibibio are presented diagrammatically as follows:



**3. Sin between and Ibibio**

Demonstratives can serve as subject of the sentence, determiners and deictic markers in the two languages. Whereas English has a two-deictic opposition system, Ibibio has three. In Ibibio, some demonstratives can function as verbs whereas this is not the case in English. Just as English incorporates *here/there* into its deictic system, a set of locative adverbs in Ibibio *mmí/ndò/nkó* also performs a similar function except that Ibibio has a third party distal reference which is not found in English. English and Ibibio deictic categories show proximal and distal reference but distal reference in Ibibio has a variation which includes third party reference. Whereas *those* indicates a distance from the speaker irrespective of how far or close the distance is to the listener, Ibibio morphologically indicates the degree of distance with the word *oko*. Distal reference is vague in English as the listener is left to infer how further away the distance is. Third party reference is non-

existent in English. *This/that* show number contrast as *these/those* while Ibibio has two sets of demonstratives, those which indicate number contrast – *àdà /mmon* and those which do not – *ámì/ ódò /ókò*. Whereas *these* is the plural form of *this* and *those* the plural form of *that* *ókò* is not the plural form of *ódò*. The point of focus is location of the referent rather than the number of the referent. It is only *àdà/mmon* which marks number contrast syntactically and morphologically in the language and help the noun they follow to have a count interpretation typical of determiners. Quirk & Greenbaum (1973) aver that demonstratives indicate number contrast, but the study of Ibibio demonstratives show that number contrast is not a universal principle in natural languages. In English, demonstratives occur in complementary distribution, the occurrence of one excludes the occurrence of another, therefore, *\*this that man* sequence is most unlikely while this is possible in Ibibio as *Àdà ámì* (this one) shows. While *àdà* is wholly count, *ámì* is deictic. Demonstratives are, therefore, more marked in Ibibio than in English.

**4. Discussion of Findings**

From the discussion, in English, an NP is the complement of D while in Ibibio the D is the complement of NP. Therefore, in Ibibio, demonstratives occur as complements of the head while in English they head the phrase which contains them as in the following tree:

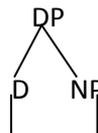


Fig. 1: DP o

Th this girl



Fig. 2: DP order in

Mma ami

Adger (2003) submission th

of D and N may vary in languages with possibility of some languages having D N order as it is in English and N D order as it is in Ibibio. Looking at the diagrams, in English, we c-merge D with N as its complement while in Ibibio, we c-merge N with D as its complement. In complement selection, “the word or phrase that is c-merged with the head” is required “by the heads internal feature” (Radford, 2004, p. 121). In English (diagram A), *this* is the head with *girl* as its complement to the left as selected by the internal feature of its

head while in Ibibio (diagrams b and c) *Mma* is the head and *ámì* is its complement to the right as selected by the internal feature of the head.

The principle of full interpretation specifies that “if two items are merged together their feature structures must be compatible (Radford, 2004, p.120). Is it therefore possible to merge a singular demonstrative with a plural noun in English? The answer is ‘No’. Such a merger will crash because it does not satisfy the internal feature of the head, but this is possible in Ibibio grammar as such a construction is grammatical as the analyses show. In a specifier-head relationship, according to Radford, (1997), there is an agreement between the head and the specifier. A close bond exists between the head and its complement and “the constituent that follows the head is required to complete the sense of the head” (Aarts, 2008, p. 101). This explains the grammaticality of the sequence of plural noun singular demonstrative constructions in Ibibio.

Whereas demonstratives in English inflect for person and number Ibibio demonstratives do not because their point of focus is principally semantic to express near and distant meaning while the head noun is syntactically required to be compatible with the verb for the utterance to be licensed as grammatical. Consequently, the merger of a plural noun with a demonstrative is not determined by number agreement but by word order which allows such a construction since the deictic markers specifically centre on the location of the entity and not the entity itself. This is why such a merger in Ibibio does not crash. In addition, third party reference is morphologically and semantically realised in Ibibio but not in English, but this does not suggest that the semantic notion of third party reference does not exist in English. It does except that no lexical item realizes this notion morphologically but the meaning is inferred. Third party reference has a null spell in English in that it is silent in overt syntax, therefore, has a null phonetic form.

From the analyses, two words – *Àdà* and *mmon* are pronominal quantifiers in Ibibio. Radford (2004) refers to pronominal quantifiers as Q-pronouns. A corollary of pronominal quantifier is pronominal quantifier. *Àdà /mmon* can function in Ibibio as what Radford (2004) refers to as pronominal and pronominal quantifiers in English. According to the source, a pronominal quantifier modifies a following noun while a pronominal quantifier does not. In Ibibio, *àdà* and *mmon* function as pronominal quantifiers and occur in subject position as noun substitute as in: *Àdà/mmon mmí ke mbó*. “This/these one/ones is/are what I am referring to” and can also function as

pronominal quantifiers by occupying a position after the verb as the object of the verb as in: *Mbó àdà /mmon mmí*. "I am referring to this/these one/ones".

## **5. Conclusion**

This paper has identified two types of demonstratives in Ibibio and specifies that one type does not inflect while another type does whereas demonstratives in English inflect for person and number. However, in the two languages this grammatical unit functions as deictic markers. We have also specified that demonstratives in Ibibio perform grammatical functions like subject, determiners and may function as a verb. It argues that the notion of third party reference exists in the two languages even though it is more marked in one language than the other. In conclusion, demonstratives occur as headed constructions in the two languages even though their positions vary.

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