Relative Distance and Relative Specificity in Walapai Demonstratives

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It is now well known that Walapai and other Yuman languages have a series of relative-distance demonstratives. There is considerable dialect variation in the usage of this system in Walapai, but the system is essentially as this writer described it in 1965.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>va</td>
<td>this, very close</td>
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<tr>
<td>ya</td>
<td>this, rather close</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wi</td>
<td>this, close</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nu</td>
<td>that far away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wa</td>
<td>that, rather far away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ha</td>
<td>that, very far away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qa</td>
<td>that, previously mentioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ka</td>
<td>who, which, someone, no one</td>
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</table>

The /v-/ means *within reach, possibly in contact with*, for most speakers, but the meaning for some can be extended to mean *just out of reach also*. The /y-/ means *a bit further away than v-/*. For most speakers, this means *close, but out of reach*; but for some, /y-/ can include *within reach, but further away than v-/*. For some speakers, /wa/ and /wi/ mean the same, but they are distinguished by most speakers. For some speakers, /nu/ means the thing referred to is *close and can be pointed at* and includes the ranges of /v-/ and /y-/, and /w-/; /nu/ for most speakers means *well out of reach, over there*. For some speakers there is no difference in /ho/ and /ha/; but for most speakers, /ha/ means *way over yonder* and /ho/ means *completely out of sight*.

In my 1966 article, it was stated that the vowel noun suffixes meant the following:

/-a/ the, a certain one, a particular one
/-i/ that, an indefinite one
/-u/ that other, an indefinite one
/-o/ the former, non-present, no longer existing

Further research shows this to be somewhat inaccurate. /-a/ includes much of the range of English "definite" the and "indefinite" a, meaning the,
this, that, a, a certain one. /-i/ is much more specific than /-a/ and means this very one, that certain one, the particular one referred to, and the thing referred to may or may not be visible. /-u/ means one of that kind, the type referred to, one like that, and usually the thing cannot be seen. /-o/ was correctly described and means gone, not present, used to be/have.

misí vač the/this/that/a girl
misí vic this particular girl, the very girl referred to
misí vuč this/that type/kind-sort of girl

há-č yá-m héł-k-yu# Water is running along here.
(water-nom. close-def.-abl. flow-3-be)

Though this sentence refers to some specific water, in this case the water running along the side of the road, it is not marked for definiteness anymore than in English. /yá-m/ refers to the closeby area in the ditch next to the road.

há-hi-č sták-v-č-k héł-k-yu# The water is on/moving.
(water-distant-specific-nom. close-this-place-allative flow-3-be)

/háhič/ refers to certain very specific water, viz. the water running out of the faucet, and is specific like the English translation using the water.

kúk pà ni-yú-č mi-ña-hmíy-a-m-t-e# Don't dare marry a man like that.
(intense=neg. man subord.-type-pl. you-subord.-marry=man-tus.-hab.-neg-intense=Impv.)

pi-vá yú-č yó-hí-we# I'm going to take one like this.

It is possible that /(pi)yúč/ is the verb /yu/, be, plus the distributive suffix /-č/, i.e. the be-er, the one that is, viz. the/a one being like this/of this type. Such subordinate verbals are common in Walapai. Since /yúč/ always seems to have a /-č/ suffix, even when not nominative, one must at least consider the possibility of its being a verbal; but /-u/ occurs with other members of the relative-distance demonstrative series (but I couldn't find or elicit /₇(p)i)θú/ or /₄(p)i)kú/).

ni-vúč this/that/the specific one/kind, the one/kind brought up from recent memory
niyúč the/that/the certain/specific kind, this/that the one I'm referring to
niwúč that/the certain/specific, this/that/the one I'm referring to
nihúč that/the kind/specific one far back in memory, that/the one/kind I'm referring to
Thus, relative specificity of time and memory are included in /-u/. It seems that the /-c/ on /yuc/ is the plural suffix, and the literal meaning of /niyuc/ is one of those kinds/types. The /ni-/ is there to add intensity.

There is also much dialect variation in the meaning of the locative suffix /-e/. For some speakers, /-e/ seems to have an intensive, as well as locative meaning.

ve  
here (closer than ya)

ye  
here (closer than ya)

we  
there

he  
way over there (further than ha)

θe  
way over there out of sight (further than θa)

ke  
where

For some speakers, there is another difference for /ve/ and /ye/, though the other forms are as given above.

ve  
here (further than ya)

ye  
here (further than ya)

For others, this intensity doesn't exist; /-e/ just indicates vagueness.

ve  
right around here somewhere

ye  
around here somewhere

we  
there

he  
way over there somewhere

θe  
way over there out of sight somewhere

This researcher has not been able to work with enough speakers of Walapai to know for sure; but it seems that speakers of the western dialects, especially Big Sandy dialect, use /-e/ with the intense meaning and that speakers of the eastern dialects use /-e/ with the more general meaning of somewhere.
1. The support of this research by the Office of Research Development and Administration, the Department of Linguistics, and the College of Liberal Arts at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale is gratefully acknowledged.

2. I worked with the Walapai language for four years without being able to discover the differences in the series of demonstratives with /-a/. In the summer of 1963, I worked with the late Lolly Powskey. One day I asked him what the differences were, and he responded, "Relative distance." Lolly was a "natural linguist" who had many insights into his language. It is very sad that he never had the opportunity to develop his great natural abilities.


5. loc. cit.

6. If the verb be is to be seen in these forms, one must ask if the form usually given for be, /yu/, is really two morphemes. If /u/ is be, what is /y(-)/? Is /y(-)/ /i/, say, or /y-/?, use a body part to verb? If /yu/ is /i/ plus /u/, i.e. say-be, is this a factitive in which the speaker vouches for the information contained in the sentence? This may be the case with /-yu/ contrasting with /-o/ as verbal suffixes, with /-a/ a quotative indicating reported speech or information for which the speaker is uncertain.

What then is /wi/, do, make? Is it the same two morphemes in reverse order, meaning be-say? Is /wi/ also a factitive? Since both /-yu/ and /-wi/ occur as auxiliaries with both transitives and intransitives (though /-yu/ is far more common with intransitives, and /-wi/ far more common with transitives), and since both contrast with the verb suffix /-a/, is this a contrast of verb classes or meanings by morpheme order?
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Number 10

PROCEEDINGS
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AND
PENUTIAN LANGUAGES CONFERENCE

James E. Redden, Editor

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June 29-July 2, 1981

Department of Linguistics
Southern Illinois University
Carbondale, Illinois

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The 1981 Hokan Languages Workshop met jointly for the first time with the Penutian Languages Conference. Also, there were not only linguistic papers, but also anthropological and archaeological papers. These two groups of specialists on American Indian languages will meet together in the future and will also meet with anthropologists and archaeologists.

Unfortunately, not everyone who presented a paper at this joint meeting was able to prepare a final version for inclusion in this volume. Also, some of the Penutianists were not aware that the proceedings of the meeting would be published in this volume and had made arrangements before coming to the meeting to publish their papers elsewhere. The papers are arranged in the order that they appeared on the program at the meeting except for the Kendall paper, which was not read but sent in for the meeting.

The participants at the meeting gratefully acknowledge all the work done by Shirley Silver and her students in the Department of Anthropology at Sonoma State University, which made the conference run so smoothly and enjoyably. We especially appreciated the help of the students who ran the late-night van shuttle between the university and the motel where the airport bus stopped.

Copies of the 1977, 1978, 1979, and 1980 Hokan Languages Workshops are still available from the Department of Linguistics, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL 62901. The volumes of the 1975 and 1976 workshops, which appeared in the SIU-C series, University Museum Studies, are now out of print, but copies may be obtained in microfiche or hard-bound volumes from ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics, Center for Applied Linguistics, 3520 Prospect St., NW, Washington, DC 20007.

James E. Redden
Carbondale, April 1982
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Title of Article</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shaul, David L.</td>
<td>A Phonemic Analysis of Esselen</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redden, James E.</td>
<td>Relative Distance and Relative Specificity in Walapai Demonstratives</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gordon, Lynn</td>
<td>Inerential Constructions in Maricopa</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Munro, Pamela</td>
<td>Vowel-Initial Roots in Yuman</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watahomigie, Lucille J., Jorgine Bender, &amp; Akira Y. Yamamoto</td>
<td>Expressions of Habit/Repetition</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O'Connor, Catherine</td>
<td>Asymmetry in the Switch-Reference System of Northern Pomo</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halpern, A. M.</td>
<td>Southeastern Pomo Directionals</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shipley, William, &amp; Richard Alan Smith</td>
<td>Nouns and Pronouns, Maidun and Otherwise</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Callaghan, Catherine A.</td>
<td>Proto Utian Derivational Noun Morphology</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kendall, Daythal</td>
<td>Some Notes Toward Using Takelma Data in Historical and Comparative Work</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>