HOLGER Diessel. *Demonstratives: Form, Function and Grammaticalization.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, (Typological Studies in Language 42), 1999. xii + 203

Reviewed by Michael Cysouw

Demonstratives are prevalent in language. The more perplexing is the fact that until recently there has never been a thorough survey of the variation of demonstrative marking among the world's languages. Holger Diessel fills this gap with the book *Demonstratives*. Based on a study of demonstratives in 85 languages –well dispersed among the world's linguistic diversity– this book aims to describe the cross-linguistic variation of demonstratives.

> 'The main purpose of this study is to provide a source of reference for both field workers and theoretical linguists who are interested in demonstratives and their grammaticalization. The book provides a systematic overview of all empirical aspects of demonstratives and addresses a number of theoretical issues that are of more general interest in typology, syntax and grammaticalization theory.' (p. 1)

Notwithstanding the small size of the book (only about 200 small-sized pages), the content fulfils these extensive goals in a delightful and clear way. The book is a first attempt towards classification and analysis of the amorphous set of phenomena called 'demonstratives'. There are some incidental omissions and a few terminological quibbles to raise, but these do not weigh against the many positive qualities. This book is a stimulating exploration that inspires to take a closer look at demonstratives.

Besides a short introduction and conclusion, the book consists of five major chapters. Four of these five chapters discuss various synchronic aspects of demonstratives: morphology, semantics, syntax and pragmatics. Finally, one chapter deals with diachronic aspects of demonstratives. The chapter on the morphological structure of demonstratives (chapter 2) sets the scene for the coming analyses. Further, Diessel shows that the far majority of demonstratives is morphologically independent (22-25) and inflected for any of the categories number, gender or case (25-28). The survey of the possible semantic distinctions of demonstratives (chapter 3) is one of the most attractive chapters. A division of distance (like *here, there* and *yonder*) is often thought of as a definitional characteristic of demonstratives, yet Diessel shows that such an opposition is not always attested (37-38). Moreover, distance is by far not the only possible distinction that is marked in demonstratives. Examples are presented of demonstratives that mark visibility, elevation, geographical features and movement of the object (41-47). Regrettably, Diessel has missed the opposition seaward/landward as attested in some Austronesian languages. The chapter on the syntactic structure of demonstratives (chapter 4) starts with an in-depth discussion of the question whether the English demonstrative pronoun (*I give you THIS*) is the same entity as the demonstrative article (*I give you THIS book*) or not. Although this is an interesting discussion, it is rather ill-placed within the cross-linguistic perspective of this book (62-71). The rest of this chapter is a discussion of the various specific syntactic functions that demonstratives can fulfil in language. The most unexpected finding is that there are languages that have specialised demonstratives for identificational purposes, i.e. demonstratives as found in a sentence like *THIS is your*

book (78-88). The final synchronic aspect that is discussed is the pragmatic use of demonstratives (chapter 5). Diessel argues that the exophoric use (aimed at focussing the hearer's attention) is the most basic function of demonstratives. Other uses are discussed (anaphoric, discourse deictic, recognitional) but are dismissed as secondary developments from an exophoric base. One of the main goals of the work has thus been bravely mastered. These four chapters present a state-of-the-art survey of the known possibilities of demonstrative marking, which can guide primary description of yet undescribed languages. A minor deficiency is the ill-placed summary. The results of these four chapters are summarised in the midst of the discussion (50-55). This summary encompasses all four descriptional dimensions and may have been places after chapter 5. The last topic that is dealt with in the book is the grammaticalisation of demonstratives. Diessel presents an impressive survey of the many possible grammatical categories that languages make out of their demonstratives. Demonstratives are a very mutable category, grammaticalising into third person pronouns, relative pronouns, complementizers, sentence connectives, possessives, definite articles, noun class markers, linkers, determinatives, number markers, indefinite articles, temporal adverbs, locational preverbs, nonverbal copulas, focus markers and expletives (119-150). The most tantalising statement of the whole book is left to the end: there is no indication among the world's languages that demonstratives have an origin in other lexical material. Demonstratives can be reinforced by other linguistic elements, but the roots are omnipresent. Diessel concludes that demonstratives might belong to the basic vocabulary of every language (150-153).

An issue of criticism concerns the use of the term 'typology' to describe the method as used in the investigation. I think that the term 'typology' is misused in this work, and something like 'cross-linguistic comparison' would be more appropriate. This may seem like a terminological quibble, but the impact is considerable. In my understanding, a cross-linguistic investigation takes the diversity of the world's languages as the input for an investigation of the extent of variation of linguistic structure. In contrast, a typology makes a classification of this variation in a certain number of types, and formulates restrictions on the possible types. Following this division of labour, the present work is clearly a cross-linguistic investigation and not a typology. To make a typology, a strict language-independent definition is necessary to delimit the boundary of investigation. Without a so-called 'tertius comparationis' it is impossible to decide which linguistic phenomena should and which should not be included into the comparison. Diessel does not present any clear definition of what a 'demonstrative' is (cf. the rather poor attempts on page 2). However, his investigation present a good basis to make a typology. A possible tertius comparationis can be found in the distinction that is made between the categorial status of a demonstrative and the syntactic distribution of the demonstrative. Diessel distinguished four distributions and four prototypically linked categories, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Demonstratives: distribution and category (4)

Distribution	Category
pronominal demonstrative	demonstrative pronoun
adnominal demonstrative	demonstrative determiner
adverbial demonstrative	demonstrative adverb
identificational demonstrative	demonstrative identifier

Diessel switches to and fro between these two levels of analysis. He presents them as equivalent starting points for an analysis of demonstratives. However, one of the main questions that remains after reading the book is the interrelation between these two levels of analysis. How are the distribution and the categorial status related? Are there any restrictions on the distribution of demonstratives over the various classes? Such *typological* questions can be approached when the distributional types are reformulated as a tertius comparationis, as shown in Table 2. The four distributional types differ as to which part of the predicate/argument structure incorporates the exophorically pointing element (DEM). Some languages use the same demonstratives throughout a range of these construction-types. As a result of a future typological investigation, one could think of a hierarchy of categorial types over these distributional types. On this hierarchy, identically encoded constructions have to be consecutive. For instance, a hierarchy that would work for English is 'adnominal > pronominal > identification > adverbial'. Yet, this is only preliminary speculation; a typological survey has to show whether any such generalisation is indeed possible.

Table 2. Redefining distribution as language-independent types

Distribution	Predicate structure	Argument structure	Example
'pronominal'	Predicate	DEM	I give you THIS
'adnominal'	Predicate	DEM (Argument)	I give you THIS book
'adverbial'	DEM (Predicate)	Argument	I put your book HERE
'identificational'	DEM	Argument	Your book is THIS/HERE

From a cross-linguistic perspective, the question of sampling (9-12) appears futile. Diessel uses a sample of 85 languages, but he does not use this sample for any typological counts (except for Table 12 on page 25). For the arguments in the rest of the book, he could have interpreted the sample simply as a lower boundary of diversity and include more languages when he came across aberrant or interesting cases. The excuse 'not in my sample' (40, 51) is a pity, for he could have easily expanded the sample *ad-hoc* to obtain an even better coverage of the linguistic diversity. In contrast, there are a few minor places where Diessel forgets to use the clearly restricted sample. For instance, he notes that there are '*only* twenty-four languages in which pronominal and adnominal demonstratives are formally distinguished' (59, italics added). In a sample of 85 languages, this is 28% of the sample, which is quite a considerable proportion. Also, he finds three languages with a downhill/uphill of downriver/upriver opposition in his sample, which is classified as 'crosslinguistically uncommon' (44). Indeed, this is only 3.5% of the sample, yet, many readers will be surprised that extrapolated to of the roughly 7000 languages in the world, this means that about 250 languages have such a seemingly exotic linguistic categorisation of demonstratives.

Interpreted as a cross-linguistic investigation, *Demonstratives* is a fine survey of the attested linguistic variation of demonstratives. For a cross-linguistic investigation, a good documentation of the attested variation is crucial. For the greater part, the references to the data are precise, though on a few places Diessel might have taken the time to present exact references where he lists only language names as examples of a certain phenomenon (38, 48, 80). What remains after reading *Demonstratives* is the wish for an extended version of this work with even more data and more analysis. This book is but a first step towards a good understanding of demonstratives in human language. Nevertheless, it is a promising, thought-provoking and wide-ranging start. This book opens up the basic question what kind of linguistic phenomenon demonstratives are; a question that has been taken for granted much too long.

General Linguistic and Dialectology
University of Nijmegen
Postbus 9103
6500 HD Nijmegen, Netherlands

Zentrum für Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft
Jägerstr. 10/11
10117 Berlin, Germany