

University of Tartu
Institute of Philosophy and Semiotics
Department of Philosophy

DEMONSTRATIVES AND THE AUDIENCE-CONTROL THEORY

Master's Thesis in Philosophy

Triinu Eesmaa

Supervisor: Alexander Stewart Davies

Tartu 2017

Demonstratives and the Audience-Control Theory

Demonstratiivid ja publikukeskne osutusteooria

Triinu Eesmaa

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
1 Semantics of Demonstratives.....	6
2 The Audience-Control Theory.....	10
3 Counterarguments to the Audience-Control Theory.....	15
3.1 The Dispensability of Audience.....	15
3.2 The Argument from Reliance on Conventions.....	16
3.3 The Undermotivation Argument.....	19
3.3.1 Cases of Successful Communication.....	19
3.3.2 Cases of Mismatch.....	20
4 Challenges from Problem Cases.....	22
4.1 The Underspecification Problem.....	22
4.2 Misleading Demonstratives.....	23
5 Responses.....	27
5.1 The Indeterminacy Response.....	27
5.2 Content Relativism about Demonstratives.....	29
5.3 Assessment of the Responses: Resolving Disagreements.....	36
Conclusion.....	39
Abstract.....	41
References.....	42

Demonstratives and the Audience-Control Theory

Triinu Eesmaa

Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to defend the audience-control theory of demonstratives. According to the audience-control theory, the semantic content of a demonstrative in a context is what an attentive and competent audience would reasonably take to be its semantic content on the basis of cues that she could take the speaker to be exploiting. Versions of the audience-control theory has been defended by Howard K. Wettstein (1984) and Komarine Romdenh-Romluc (2002, 2004). However, the theory has remained quite unpopular and the counterarguments that have been presented against it have not been addressed in the literature. In this thesis, I will respond to these counterarguments.

Altogether, five arguments have been made against the audience-control theory. Three of these arguments can be responded to by relying on the existing framework of the audience-control theory. The other two arguments require clarifying what the audience-control theory would predict about the semantic content in certain situations where communication fails, i.e. in situations where at least a part of the audience does not grasp the content that is intended by the speaker, but reasonably thinks that the content is different. These arguments are what I will call the argument from underspecification and the argument from cases of misleading.

I will present two ways to respond to these two arguments. The first response is what I will call the indeterminacy response, which responds to problem by arguing that in cases where there are several things that can be reasonably identified as the content of the demonstrative by the audience, the audience-control theory predicts that it is indeterminate what the demonstrative refers to. The second is the content relativist response, which rests on the rejection of an assumption that the counterarguments rely on. This assumption is that there is a unique content for a given use of a demonstrative. If a proponent of the audience-control theory is to drop this assumption, then they ought to adopt content relativism about demonstratives. According to content relativism about demonstratives, if there are multiple ways that an audience can reasonably interpret a demonstrative on a usage event, then the demonstrative has different contents relative to different members of the audience on that

usage event. After having outlined the two responses, I will provide an assessment of them by considering how well they are suited to handle cases where disagreements about what a demonstrative refers to are revealed to the interlocutors. Content relativism about demonstratives enables us to explain more precisely what is going on in cases where interlocutors disagree about what a demonstrative refers to. However, considerations about how speakers behave when disagreements about content are revealed seem to favour the indeterminacy response.

There are two broader projects that this thesis is a part of. Responding to the counterarguments provides a way of putting the audience-control theory on par with the speaker-control theory, according to which speaker's intentions fix what a demonstrative refers to. Compared to the audience-control theory, the speaker-control theory has gained a lot of attention. Often, the audience-control theory is not even considered as an option. Thus, the thesis will be an attempt to broaden the range of available theories of demonstratives. The thesis can also be seen as a part of the broader program of speech act relativism. Speech act pluralism is the view according to which by uttering a sentence, the speaker says more than just one thing. On a particular version of speech act pluralism, the set of propositions expressed can also vary between contexts of interpretation. Relative to one interpreter, the speaker says one thing, relative to another, she says something else. So content relativism is very similar to speech act pluralism. Cappelen and Lepore (2015) have argued that the theoretical utility of what they call speech act pluralism has not been fully recognized. The thesis can be seen as a part of the project of exploring what the theoretical potential of content relativism/ speech act pluralism is.

The thesis will have the following structure. In the first section, I will give a brief introduction to the semantics of demonstratives and narrow the range of theories under consideration to just those theories that aim to account for the semantics of all demonstratives, including so called true demonstratives like 'this', 'that', 'he', 'she', etc. I will also outline an important methodological requirement for semantic theories. The requirement is that a semantic theory has to make predictions about the semantic properties of expressions, as used in particular cases, which systematically correlate with the intuitions which competent speakers of the language have about the semantic properties of those expressions in those cases.

In the second section, I will introduce the audience-control theory. An upside of this theory is that it relies on publicly accessible features of the speech situation and that it makes correct

predictions in a wide range of cases where demonstratives are used. In the third section, I will consider three counterarguments and respond to them. In the fourth section, I will present two further counterarguments. The first of these counterarguments – the underspecification argument – is the worry that there are situations where a demonstrative is used, but the audience-control theory fails to make a prediction because it does not specify relative to which audience the content of the demonstrative is fixed. The second counterargument – the argument from cases of misleading – is that the audience-control theory makes the wrong prediction in cases where a demonstrative is used in misleading an audience.

In the fifth and final section, I will respond to these two arguments. There are two responses that a proponent of the audience-control theory can adopt in order to tackle these counterarguments – the indeterminacy response and the content relativist response. In this section, I will also assess these responses.

1 Semantics of Demonstratives

Reese and Paul are standing in line at a bakery and admiring the selection of cakes and pastries on display. Pointing at an extravagantly decorated cupcake, Paul says, 'That looks just delicious! I want one of those.' Reese grins at the sight of Paul's excitement and says, 'Okay, Paul, I'll get you this one, and I'll get myself that one,' pointing at a chocolate éclair. When we direct our attention to the words that are used in this situation, we can see that some of the words – 'I', 'that', 'those', 'you', 'this', 'myself' – are used to talk about different things on different uses. When Paul says 'I', he is talking about himself, and when Reese uses 'I', she is saying something about herself. She can talk about Paul when she switches the pronoun to 'you'. It seems that 'that' and 'this' can be used to talk about anything that the speaker wants to talk about. The mentioned expressions exemplify a class of context-sensitive expressions – demonstratives.¹ Demonstratives also include expressions such as 'she', 'he', 'we', 'they', 'it', 'today', 'tomorrow', 'now', 'here', 'actual' etc.

There is a sense in which, although a demonstrative can refer to different things on different uses, it still always has the same meaning. For example, it's not that 'you' changes meaning when it is used to address different people. Unlike expressions such as 'bank' or 'bat', it's not ambiguous. This suggests that the meanings of demonstratives are not identical with what they refer to. If that is so, then how should we characterize the meanings of demonstratives? It is apparent that demonstratives display striking systematicity in how they refer. For example, 'today' always seems to refer to the day on which it is uttered. 'I' always refers to the speaker, and 'now' to the time of the utterance. It seems that for every utterance which includes a demonstrative, the demonstrative has a referent that systematically depends on the features of the context in which the utterance takes place. This suggests that there is an element of the semantics of demonstratives which is stable and determines the referent for different uses of the demonstrative, given some features of the context in which it is used. A semantic theory of demonstratives has to account for this systematicity. That is, it has to minimally give answers to three interrelated questions:

¹ It is common to divide this class of expressions into indexicals (such as 'I', 'today', 'tomorrow') and true demonstratives (such as 'he', 'she', 'this', 'that'). Usually it is thought that the referents of (pure) indexicals are fixed automatically by relatively easily determinable features of the context. Demonstratives, on the other hand, are thought to require some supplementation in order to refer. Although I will later make use of this distinction, for the most part I will follow Kaplan (1989) and use the term 'demonstratives' to cover both demonstratives and indexicals.

- 1) How can demonstratives refer to different things on different uses?
- 2) If a demonstrative can refer to different things on different uses, then how can it have an unambiguous meaning?
- 3) How does the stable, unambiguous meaning of a demonstrative determine what the demonstrative refers to on different uses?

The received semantic theory of demonstratives, proposed by Kaplan (1989), does exactly this. Kaplan distinguishes between two semantic levels – character and content. The content of a demonstrative is what it refers to in a context. The context is a sequence of parameters like a time, place, agent and possible world. The character is what determines the content of the demonstrative in the context. According to Kaplan, character is a function that takes as input a context and yields as output a content. For example, Kaplan (1989: 505) proposes that the character of 'I' takes as input the context in which it is uttered and gives as output the agent of the context. Character can also be identified with linguistic meaning, which is what competent speakers of a language grasp in virtue of their competence and use to communicate contents. Kaplan's account has many virtues – it is compact, yet has great explanatory power. At the same time, this theory in its simplicity does not have the tools for dealing with all the data that it should be able to deal with.

The kind of data I have in mind are the intuitions of competent language users. Any semantic theory for a natural language should conform to the intuitions of the competent speakers of that language.² A semantic theory conforms to the speakers' intuitions if the predictions that it would make about the semantic properties of expressions in specific cases of language use are in accordance with the intuitions that speakers have about the semantic properties of those expressions in those cases. The basis of this methodological requirement is the assumption that what constitutes a speaker's linguistic ability is her implicit knowledge about the semantics of the language. Cases of language use function as test-cases for semantic theories. Cases can be used to evaluate theories for correctness and to compare them to one another. If there is a theory whose predictions about the semantic properties of expressions conform to speakers' intuitions about the semantic properties of those expressions in a wide range of cases, then

² Sometimes a case can be made that speaker's intuitions track the pragmatic rather than semantic features of language. In that case, something should be said about what distinguishes these purportedly pragmatic features from genuinely semantic features. Intuitions should not be left aside just because they do not fit the theory under consideration.

that strongly indicates that the theory is more or less correct.

Kaplan's theory faces challenges from cases where it is unable to make predictions which conform to the intuitions of competent language users. In order to explain why one would favour the kind of theory that I will be defending in my thesis, I will introduce the distinction between indexicals and true demonstratives.³ So, firstly, there are indexicals such as 'I', 'here', 'now', 'today', 'tomorrow'. Their referents are fixed automatically, given the context of the utterance, which, as specified earlier, includes the agent, location, time and possible world. For example, 'today' will pick out the day of the utterance as the referent, and the referent of 'I' is the agent in the context. To say that the referents of pure indexicals are fixed automatically is to say that the meaning of the indexical is sufficient to pick out a referent to pick out a determinate content, given a context. As Kaplan (1989: 491) puts it, “No supplementary actions or intentions are needed.” Not only is the character of a pure indexical sufficient for determining a referent, the referent of a pure indexical cannot be defeated by any associated demonstration or speaker intention. For example, when someone uses the expression 'I' while pointing to somebody else or intending to use 'I' to refer to that person, 'I' will still refer to the person who is using it.

Secondly, there are true demonstratives, of which the most paradigmatic examples are 'this' and 'that', but also 'he', 'she', 'it', etc. These are expressions which require something additional to fix the referent, since the meaning of the expression is not sufficient for automatically picking out a referent, given the time, place and agent of the utterance. It seems that for true demonstratives, a mere demonstration can fix what the referent of a demonstrative is in a context, even if the speaker does not wish to refer to the thing that ends up as the referent. It might seem at first glance that the reference-fixing feature of demonstratives just could be an accompanying demonstration, such as a finger-pointing or a nod. But on further consideration this proposal looks implausible, since demonstrations can successfully refer without any accompanying demonstration. In addition to demonstrations being dispensable for successful reference, it is a problem that demonstrations are inherently indeterminate. Demonstrations never single out just one thing. As Kaplan says,

[...]whenever I point at something, from the surveyor's point of view I point at many things. When I point at my son (and say 'I love [that]'), I may also be pointing at a book he is holding, his jacket, a button on his jacket, his skin, his heart, and his dog standing

³ Although the distinction has been called into question (for example by Mount, 2008), I will assume for the purposes of making clear which theories aim to account for which expressions that there is a distinction.

behind him[...] (1978: 396)

Now that I have introduced the distinction between indexicals and true demonstratives, I can be more clear about the scope of the thesis. Kaplan's theory is challenged by both cases in which indexicals and cases in which true demonstratives are used. Whereas some modifications of Kaplan's theory, such as Cohen (2013), Corazza et al. (2002), Gorravett (2005), Michelson (2014), Sidelle (1991), etc., have only been concerned with giving correct predictions in cases which involve the use of indexicals, there is a group of theories which have the means to account for uses of both indexicals and true demonstratives. Such theories have been called doxastic control theories, since according to them, the content of a demonstrative is fixed by a mechanism which involves the mental states of the conversational participants. If doxastic control theories can adequately deal with most cases of demonstratives, including both indexicals and true demonstratives, then in virtue of having greater explanatory power, they are preferable to theories that cannot deal with true demonstratives. Doxastic control theories can be broadly divided into two – the speaker-control theory and the audience-control theory. According to the speaker-control theory, the content of a demonstrative in a context is fixed by the speaker's intention. A bit more formally:

The Speaker-Control Theory

The content of a demonstrative d is x in context c iff the speaker of c would intend d to refer to x .

For example, if someone uses the sentence 'this is smaller than this,' the contents of 'this' in the context will be fixed by the referential intentions that accompany each occurrence of 'this' in the sentence. This theory has gained widespread support and is the main rival of the audience-control theory. Compared to the speaker-control theory, the audience-control theory has received little attention. Since the purpose of this thesis is to defend the audience-control theory against counterarguments, and a more thorough discussion of the speaker-control theory is not required for this purpose, I will not be spending any more time focusing solely on the speaker-control theory. Instead, I will go on to introduce the audience-control theory.

2 The Audience-Control Theory

In this section, I will present the audience-control theory and provide some reasons in favour of it. According to the audience-control theory, a demonstrative refers to what an audience would reasonably take it to refer to. Attentiveness and linguistic competence is required of the relevant audience. The audience-control theory differs from the demonstration theory of reference and the speaker-control theory in that according to it, there is no single thing which fixes the referent of the demonstrative in all contexts. Rather, in different contexts, the referent will be fixed by different features of the context. But what is common to those features is that they determine the referent because it is reasonable for an audience member to take those features as evidence of what the speaker is intending to refer to. This means that the account allows for the speaker to be creative when using demonstratives so long as the audience is in a position to grasp the referent. The audience-control theory has been defended by Wettstein (1984) and Romdenh-Romluc (2002, 2004).

These authors have formulated the theory in different ways:

The Audience-Control Theory (Wettstein)

The content of a demonstrative *D* is *x* in context *c* iff a competent and attentive audience *A* would identify *x* as the content of *D* in *c* on the basis of cues that *A* would reasonably take the speaker of *c* to be exploiting. (Wettstein 1984: 73)

The Audience-Control Theory for Indexicals (Romdenh-Romluc)

The content of an indexical *I* is fixed relative to a context *c* iff the attentive and competent audience *A* would identify *c* as the context relative to which the content of *I* is fixed on the basis of cues *A* would reasonably take the speaker to be exploiting. (Romdenh-Romluc 2002: 39)

While Romdenh-Romluc's formulation only concerns indexicals, Wettstein's formulation allows us to account for all demonstratives, including true demonstratives, because instead of specifying how the content-fixing context is picked out, the latter specifies how the content itself is picked out. As I explained in the first section, since the content of a demonstrative is not automatically fixed in a context, in order to fix the content of a true demonstrative, it does not suffice to merely fix relative to which context it has a content.

Ultimately, it seems that there is no reason to prefer a separate formulation of the audience-control theory for pure indexicals. In order to see this, let's look at the formulation provided by Romdenh-Romluc. According to it, the context fixed by a reasonable audience will fix the referent of the indexical. If the indexical refers to *anything* relative to that context, then there is a unique thing that it refers to. This means that in cases where an indexical refers, if a reasonable audience member fixes the context, they simultaneously fix the unique referent. So it makes no difference to what the audience-control theory would predict about indexicals whether we conceive of the audience as context-fixing or content-fixing. Since conceiving of the audience-control theory as a theory which explains how content is fixed allows for us to give a unified account of true demonstratives and indexicals, I will take the formulation provided by Wettstein to be better for the purposes of the thesis. In the following, I will use the name 'the audience-control theory' to refer to the thesis under the formulation provided by Wettstein.

Having stated the theory, we can see what motivates it. Why should we think that demonstratives refer by this kind of a mechanism? There are general theoretic reasons to favour the audience-control theory, as well as some concrete cases where demonstratives are used which support the theory. It has been argued that reference has to be determined by publicly accessible things (Gauker 2008). Since speakers' intentions are not publicly accessible, intentions cannot determine content. Supposedly, since the content of an expression has to be available to all conversational participants, what determines content has to be available to them, too. Why should it be accepted that semantic content is public?

Firstly, it seems that if it weren't and the contents of utterances were systematically unavailable to the interlocutors, then communication would systematically fail. But communication is often successful. This would be explained by the fact that contents are available to everyone participating in the conversation. Secondly, there is the following argument, which has been defended by Recanati (2004). Hearers are able to infer what is merely implied from what is, strictly speaking, said. 'What is said' is the content of an uttered sentence. Now, plausibly, this kind of inference is only possible if hearers have access to the content of the utterance. It follows that semantic content must be available to the audience. But why do the *determiners* of content in addition to the contents themselves have to be available to audiences as well as speakers? Since the determiners of content are what aids audience members in figuring out what the content is in a context, the determiners of content should be public features of the context. If audiences do not have access to what determines content, they are not able to

figure out what the content is. The fact that audience-control theory satisfies the requirement of accessibility motivates the theory.

In addition to satisfying this general requirement, the audience-control view is supported by cases in which the intuitive referent of a demonstrative corresponds to something that the audience reasonably takes the demonstrative to refer to, and not to what the speaker intends to refer to or what is demonstrated. I will consider two examples. Here is the first example, introduced by Romdenh-Romluc.

RE-ENACTMENT

Fernando is taking part in a re-enactment of the Norman Conquest. The re-enactment is to be staged in a manor house. Fernando is to play the part of Harold's messenger, who announces to the King that the French are invading England. At the appointed time, Fernando bursts into the main hall and announces to the assembled guests,

'Now the French are invading England!'

However, Fernando has confused the date of the re-enactment. He has arrived a week early and made his announcement to wedding guests who are staying at the manor, not other people involved in the re-enactment of the Norman Conquest. (Romdenh-Romluc 2002: 37)

In the example, Fernando intends to refer to 1066, which is when the Norman Conquest took place. But the audience members, if they are competent in English, pay attention to the utterance, and are generally reasonable people, take him to refer to the time of the wedding. Intuitively 'now' refers to the time of the wedding rather than to the year 1066. We can without controversy presume that the audience is attentive and competent in English. So the intuitive referent 'now' conforms to what a competent and attentive audience would take to be the referent of 'now'.

Let's look at the second example. Kaplan (1978: 240) has devised the following case:

CARNAP/AGNEW

Suppose that without turning and looking I point to the place on my wall which has long been occupied by a picture of Rudolf Carnap and I say, "That is a picture of one of the

greatest philosophers of the twentieth century.' But unbeknownst to me, someone has replaced my picture of Carnap with one of Spiro Agnew. [...] I have said of a picture of Spiro Agnew that it pictures one of the greatest philosophers of the twentieth century. And my speech and demonstration suggest no other natural interpretation [...] No matter how hard I intend Carnap's picture, I do not think it reasonable to call the content of my utterance true.

Kaplan intends to refer to the picture of Carnap, but intuitively 'that' refers to the picture of Agnew. The audience-control theory can explain why this is so. It is reasonable for the person whom Kaplan is addressing in the example to think that Kaplan intends to refer to the picture of Agnew, given that Kaplan points to the picture of Agnew and says that it's a picture, and the speaker does not know that there was another picture on the wall before nor knows who Agnew is.

There is a potential problem with the audience-control theory. One might think that if contents of demonstratives are fixed by what the audience can reasonably take the speaker to say, then speakers do not have control over what they say. But this is not what the audience-control theory implies. Since according to this theory, a semantic content relative to an interpreter is determined by somebody who bases their interpretation firmly on cues which the speaker could employ, the speaker does have control over what they say. The speaker can choose which expressions to use, she can use gestures and external objects to help get her intended content across to her audience. It is true that the audience-control theory gives the speaker much more responsibility in communication than the speaker-control theory. The speaker needs to do enough if she wants to be understood correctly. But this seems to be in accordance with what is required from actual speakers. Mere intentions to refer to things are not sufficient for successful communication in actual communication situations. If the interpreter has a role in determining what the semantic content of an expression is in a context, then that would explain why speakers have to do more than merely intend to express their intended contents to others. Thus, the observations that on the audience-control theory, speakers do not always have full control over what they say, and that what they can say is restricted by what the audience can understand is not a weakness. Rather, it is a strength of the audience-control theory.

Although the audience-control theory is able to explain speakers' intuitions in cases where the speaker-control theory is not, the audience-control theory has been far less popular than the

speaker-control theory and the proponents of the audience-control theory have failed to provide any responses to arguments which have been presented against it. For this reason, as things currently stand, the audience-control theory looks defeated. In the next two sections, I will provide an overview of the arguments which have been presented against the audience-control theory. Altogether, there are five counterarguments. In the third section, I will present the first three counterarguments and respond to them. In the fourth section, I will provide two ways of specifying what predictions the audience-control theory would make in certain problem cases, so that the remaining two counterarguments can be responded to as well.

3 Counterarguments to the Audience-Control Theory

In this section, I will consider three counterarguments to the audience-control theory. These arguments can be responded to within the framework of the audience-control theory as it has already been introduced.

3.1 The Dispensability of Audience

According to the first counterargument, an audience is completely unnecessary for successful reference. Predelli (2002: 312) argues that an utterance does not need to have an audience in order for a demonstrative to refer. Let's take the Re-enactment case as an example. Someone can utter 'Now England is being invaded' to herself while thinking about the Norman Conquest without the presence of anyone else. Intuitively, the lack of audience does not stop her from referring to what she does. The speaker will then have referred to 1066, even though nobody is overhearing him. The problem here is that while intuitively 'now' does refer, the audience-control theory would predict reference-failure because there is no audience. If there is no audience, there is nobody to take the demonstrative to refer to anything. So the audience-control view gives an incorrect prediction.

However, this is really not a problem that the audience-control view cannot handle. Predelli's argument is based on the assumption that the speaker and audience are always distinct. But this is not an assumption that the audience-control theory needs to rely on. A natural response would be that in cases where the speaker is talking to herself, the speaker and the audience are identical. Before the utterance takes place, the speaker is probably narrating the story of the Norman Conquest in her inner speech. The utterance is part of this discourse for the speaker. So it is reasonable for her to take 'here' to refer to the time of the Norman Conquest. The present moment does not have any role in the discourse. Since in the described case, the audience, being identical to the speaker, would reasonably take herself to refer to 1066, the content of 'now' relative to her context is 1066. It would be unreasonable for her to take herself to refer to the present moment, given the broader context of her utterance. This prediction agrees with the intuition that 'now' refers to 1066. Therefore, the audience-control theory does not falsely predict that demonstratives fail to refer when they are used in situations where there is nobody present besides the speaker.

3.2 The Argument from Reliance on Conventions

The second counterargument for the audience-control theory is based on the observation that audiences sometimes seem to rely on conventions when they judge what the content of a demonstrative on a particular usage event is. Predelli (2002: 312) argues that the audience-control theory cannot specify what the competence of the hearer amounts to without appealing to them being familiar with conventions. Hence, the audience-control theory reduces to conventionalism about demonstratives. Since according to him, the conventionalist account of demonstratives is unsatisfying, the audience-control theory is also unsatisfying.

In order to present Predelli's argument, I will first introduce the answering machine puzzle, because the argument depends on the way that Romdenh-Romluc explains the way the audience makes judgments about semantic content in answering machine cases. Consider the following sentence:

(1) I am not here now

According to the analysis that Kaplan (1989) proposed of 'I', 'here' and 'now':

- (i) 'I' refers to the agent of the context of utterance;
- (ii) 'here' refers to the place of the context of utterance;
- (iii) 'now' refers to the time of the context of utterance.

'I am here now' as uttered in a context is true if and only if the agent who produces the utterance is at the place of the utterance at the time of the utterance. Since the agent of the utterance is always at the place of the utterance at the time of the utterance, 'I am here now' will be true in every context. It follows that the negation of 'I am here now', i.e. (1) is false in every context. But there are cases where it seems that (1) is uttered truthfully. When we hear a recorded message of (1) on a phone, it does seem to be true. In order for a theory to make the prediction that (1) is truthfully uttered in answering machine cases, the theory has to predict that the content of (1) in those cases is that the owner of the line is not in the location of the phone at the time of the call. Kaplan's theory makes an incorrect prediction for the content of (1) in answering machine cases.

Having presented the answering machine puzzle, we can move on to Predelli's argument. Let's

imagine a scenario where a caller takes 'now' in (1) to refer to some time before the call rather than to the time of the call. If the audience-control theory is to make the correct prediction that 'now' refers to the time of the call, then it has to rule out the possibility that such a caller counts as a competent audience. It seems that in order to disqualify this caller from being competent, a proponent of the audience-control theory should say that an audience member is competent only if they are familiar with how answering machines work. Regarding demonstratives, knowing how answering machines work amounts to being familiar with the conventions governing the use of demonstratives in answering machine cases. Romdenh-Romluc seems to agree with this statement in the following passage: “the caller will take [the speaker] to be exploiting the convention that an answering machine message refers to the time when I is heard by the caller” (Romdenh-Romluc 2002: 39). Since a competent audience, who fixes the content of a demonstrative, must have the reaction prescribed by the convention when a demonstrative is used, it seems that the convention screens off audience's reactions from doing any real reference-fixing. The convention rather than the audience fixes the referent.

Based on this observation, Predelli claims that the audience-control theory is a version of the conventionalist theory, according to which the content of a demonstrative is fixed by the conventions that are associated with the different types of contexts. The problem with this kind of a view is that it is implausible that there are conventions regulating all settings where one can successfully use demonstratives. On different communication channels demonstratives refer differently. If this is the case, then there must be different conventions governing the use of demonstratives on those communication channels. Predelli thinks that this is unlikely.

Now, I will respond to Predelli's argument. Predelli takes the answering machine puzzle to show that an audience must always rely on conventions to reasonably make a judgment about the content of the demonstrative. However, one example case is not enough to motivate this universal conclusion. Even if there is a convention which governs the use of answering machines and enables hearers to figure out what the unique content of utterances of (1) is in answering machine cases, that does not mean that for any setting, there must be a convention in place for the hearer to take demonstratives to refer to things. Since the audience both can and must rely on other features of the speech situation in order to make a judgment about what the content of a demonstrative is on a particular use, the audience-control theory does not reduce to conventionalism.

Let me explain first why the audience must rely on other things besides conventions and then explain what these features are. The conventional aspects of semantics of demonstratives underdetermine reference. The conventional features of demonstratives that I have in mind are constraints on what demonstratives can be used or reasonably taken to refer to.⁴ Constraints on reference differ for different demonstratives. For example, the 'we' will refer to more than one individual because the expression 'we' linguistically encodes that its reference in a context includes more than one individual. But clearly, this kind of a conventional feature of the expression 'we' is not sufficiently determinate. It does not suffice to fix a content, given a context. But a competent language user will be guided by these constraints. This kind of proposal enables us to weaken the competence required of an audience. We can say that a language user is competent with demonstratives if they know how to use demonstratives in a way that satisfies these kinds of constraints.

The assumption that the conventional features associated with demonstratives are not sufficiently determinate to fix a content relative to a context is evident when it comes to true demonstratives. Utterances which include multiple occurrences of the same true demonstrative show this. For example, we can truthfully say about two objects 'That's taller than that'. For the sentence to come out as true in a context, the two occurrences of 'that' have to have different contents. Hence, whatever is the referential constraint associated with 'that'⁵, it does not suffice to fix a unique referent relative to a context.⁶ It seems that the conventions associated with indexicals are not always sufficiently determinate to pick out a referent either. If there is a convention governing the use of 'now' on a type of communication device, then it must establish which time 'now' refers to any time it is used on that device. It should either always refer to the time when the message is produced or always refer to the time that the message is read or heard. However, as Gidwani (2017) has argued, the use of indexicals does not display that kind of regularity on at least certain kinds of communication channels – for example, on postcards, the internet and video. Sometimes, 'now' on these channels refers to the time of the production, and sometimes to the decoding of the message.

⁴ For example, François Recanati (2001) talks about these kinds of constraints on reference for demonstratives.

⁵ The referential constraint cannot be that the referent must be demonstrated by the speaker, for reasons given in section one.

⁶ One view that would avoid this conclusion is the view that the context changes with each occurrence of 'that'. This kind of a theory has been proposed by David Braun (1996).

So, it seems that Predelli is correct to point out that conventions do not suffice to fix what demonstratives refer to. But this is not a strong blow against the audience-control theory. Although the content-fixing audience must be familiar with the conventional features of demonstratives, it is them rather than the conventions that fix the contents of demonstratives. Since the audience can rely on other features of the speech situation besides conventions, there is work to be done by audiences in fixing the contents of demonstratives. So what kinds of other features of the speech situation can the audience rely on to make a judgment about what a demonstrative refers to?

Since speakers can use a wide array of different tools to reveal what they intend to refer to, the audience can take this creativity into account. Speakers can use the constraints that are associated with at least some demonstratives, other sentences in the discourse, sub-sentential expressions, head-nods, pointings, the prominence of objects, previous conversations, objects in some way related to the intended referent, etc., to make it clear what they intend to refer to when they use a demonstrative. The audience members make a judgment, given available evidence about what the speaker intends to refer to.

3.3 The Undermotivation Argument

Thirdly, Cohen and Michaelson (2013: 586) have the worry that the audience-control theory is undermotivated by the example cases of the audience-control theory. The main point is that the cases do not favour the audience-control theory over the speaker-control theory, since the predictions that both theories make about the cases are equally good. The cases that theories of demonstratives aim to explain can be broadly divided into two groups. Firstly, there are cases where the audience successfully grasps the referent that is intended by the speaker. Secondly, there are cases where the intended referent and the so called public referent diverge. The latter sort of cases are called cases of mismatch. Since the undermotivation problem is different for the success and mismatch cases reason, I will handle the problem in two separate subsections.

3.3.1 Cases of Successful Communication

Cases, where what a speaker intends to refer to and what the audience takes her to refer to coincide, are equally well explained by the speaker-control theory and the audience-control theory. The theories make identical predictions for these cases. An example of this is a standard answering machine case, where a caller hears an utterance of (1), and takes it to say

that the owner of the line is not at the location of the phone at the time of the call. This is the intuitive content of (1) in answering machine cases and both the audience-control theory and the speaker-control theory make predictions conforming to our intuition. Cohen and Michaelson argue that because of this, the case fails to motivate the audience-control theory.

It is correct to point out that cases of successful communication by themselves are not sufficient to show that the audience-control theory is better than the speaker-control theory. However, this should not surprise a proponent of the audience-control theory. After all, the answering machine case is not presented by Romdenh-Romluc as one that would motivate the audience-control theory *over* the speaker-control theory. Rather, the case works as a test-case which an adequate theory of demonstratives should be able to account for. It is in itself not a problem for the audience-control theory that other theories can also account for the case. The fact that the audience-control theory makes a prediction about the content of (1) which corresponds to the intuitive content of (1) in answering machine cases does in no way undermine the audience-control theory.

3.3.2 Cases of Mismatch

In mismatch cases, which I will describe in a moment, the predictions which the audience-control theory makes differ from those that the speaker-control theory makes. It seems that the intuitive referent in those cases coincides with the prediction that the audience-control theory makes. The re-enactment case is one such case. Since the audience-control theory makes a better prediction than the speaker-control theory, the case should motivate the audience-control theory over the speaker-control theory. However, Cohen and Michaelson (2013: 586) argue, it is problematic that this advantage of the audience-control theory depends on the strategy of using idealized audiences rather than actual audiences. According to the audience-control theory, in cases where the actual audience is incompetent, inattentive or unreasonable, the referent is not fixed relative to that audience, but relative to an idealized audience that is identical in other respects.

Cohen and Michaelson argue that if this is a legitimate strategy for the audience-control theory, then it should be a permissible strategy for the speaker-control theory as well. If the audience-control theory can appeal to idealization in order to make correct prediction in cases of mismatch, then the speaker-control theory could appeal to idealized *speakers* to make the same prediction. So, in cases of mismatch, the speaker-control theory would get the correct prediction relative to an idealized speaker. To my knowledge, no proponent of the speaker-

control theory has adopted this kind of a view, and Cohen and Michaelson do not spell it out. Nevertheless, let's see what such an appeal to an idealized speaker look like. I will use a mismatch example from Christopher Gauker (2008) to illustrate.

TIE

Harry and Sally are at a department store and Harry is trying on ties. Harry has wrapped a garish pink-and-green tie around his neck and is looking at himself in a mirror. Sally is standing next to the mirror gazing toward the tie around Harry's neck and says, "That matches your new jacket." As a matter of fact, Sally has been contemplating in thought the tie that Harry tried on two ties back. At first she thought she did not like it, but then it occurred to her that it would look good with Harry's new jacket. We can even suppose that in saying 'that' what she intended to refer to was the tie two ties back. But under the circumstances, Harry is in no position to realize that the tie she intended to refer to was the tie two ties back and therefore is in no position to take Sally's intention into account in identifying the reference of her demonstrative 'that'. The only thing one could reasonably expect Sally's demonstrative 'that' to refer to is the pink-and-green tie around Harry's neck. (Gauker 2008: 363)

Let's assume for the moment that as a matter of fact, 'that' refers to the tie around Harry's neck. The regular speaker-control theory would give the incorrect prediction that 'that' refers to the tie two ties back. The idealized speaker-control theory should predict that it refers to the tie that Harry is wearing. This theory should state that the referent of a demonstrative in a context is fixed by what a competent, attentive and reasonable speaker would intend to refer to by the demonstrative in that context. This is an intriguing proposal. This means that in cases where there is a mismatch between what the speaker intends to say and what the audience takes the speaker to say, the audience-control theory and the speaker-control theory offer equally good explanations. Indeed, there would be no mismatch.

However, it seems that the idealization strategy is not available for the proponent of the speaker-control theory. This is because there seems that there is no audience-independent way to determine what the idealized speaker would intend. An idealized speaker would intend to refer to precisely the thing that external cues point to from the perspective of an audience member. So it seems that the idealized speaker-control theory would collapse into the audience-control theory while the contrary is not true.

4 Challenges from Problem Cases

In this section, I will present two more arguments against the audience-control theory. According to the first of these arguments, the way that the audience-control theory is set up by Wettstein and Romdenh-Romluc leaves it unclear what kinds of predictions it would make in specific cases outside the ones described by Wettstein and Romdenh-Romluc. This suggests that the audience-control theory fails to make a prediction about the content of the demonstrative in cases where there is more than one thing that the audience members can reasonably take to be the content of a demonstrative. According to the second argument, the audience-control theory cannot be used to explain cases wherein demonstratives are used to mislead the audience.

4.1 The Underspecification Problem

Cohen and Michaelson (2013: 586) have argued that the restrictions, which the proponents of the audience-control theory place on audiences relative to which the content of a demonstrative is fixed, are not sufficiently restrictive to single out a unique content. The audience-control theory requires that the referent be one that is identified by an attentive and competent audience based on cues that the speaker can be reasonably taken to exploit. However, insofar as people can have different background beliefs, perceptual capabilities and perspectives on a situation, the cues that they can reasonably take the speaker to exploit can differ from person to person. And differences in beliefs, perceptual capabilities and perspectives do not necessarily render one person less attentive, linguistically competent or reasonable than another. Therefore it is entirely possible that there is more than one thing that the attentive and competent members of an audience can reasonably take to be the content on the basis of the cues that they can take the speaker to be exploiting.

Because the audience-control theory does not specify how to identify a single audience relative to whom the referent of a demonstrative is fixed, it is unclear exactly what kinds of predictions the audience-control view would make about the referents of demonstratives in particular cases outside the ones described in Romdenh-Romluc (2002, 2004) and Wettstein (1984). The success of the audience-control theory depends on the specific description of cases like the Re-enactment case and the Carnap/Agnew case. The distinctive feature of these cases is that there is consensus between all the attentive, competent and reasonable members of the audience about what the demonstratives in the cases refer to. To see this, we can make

slight changes to the cases and see what the audience-control theory would predict.

First, let's return to the re-enactment case and make a slight adjustment to the audience in the case. Let's suppose that a part of the audience knows that there will be a re-enactment of the Norman Conquest and that Fernando is playing the part of the messenger. The other audience members will be unaware of the re-enactment just as before. When Fernando bursts in the door and yells, 'Now the French are invading England,' the members of the audience aware of the re-enactment will most likely realize what is going on. They will take 'now' to refer to the time that is being re-enacted, 1066, and not to the time of the wedding. But the members of the audience who are unaware of the re-enactment will reasonably take 'now' to refer to the time of the wedding. Since Romdenh-Romluc assumes that there is only one semantic content associated with one use of 'now', it is not clear what kind of a prediction they would make for this case. Both of the groups in the audience can be assumed to be attentive, competent and making a reasonable judgment based on the evidence that is available to them. There is no basis for claiming that only one of them is the audience relative to whose context the demonstrative has its semantic content.

4.2 Misleading Demonstratives

In this subsection, I will describe the counterargument that Brian Weatherson (2002) has presented against the audience-control view. Weatherson's concern is that the audience control theory makes incorrect predictions in cases where the speaker is misleading the audience about what is said. According to the audience-control view, whatever the audience would take to be the content of the demonstrative in a given context just is its content in that context. Because of this, the audience-control view entails that it is not possible to mislead a reasonable audience about what the content of a demonstrative is. However, there are examples where the audience seems to be mistaken about what the content of a demonstrative is on a given use. The following two cases are provided by Weatherson to support this intuition.

PRANK

Imagine that at my University the email servers are down, so all communication from the office staff is written notes left in our mailboxes. I notice that one of my colleagues, Bruce, has a rather full mailbox, and hence must not have been checking his messages for the last day or two. I also know that Bruce is a forgetful type, and if someone told him that he'd forgotten about a faculty meeting yesterday, he'd probably believe them. In

fact he hasn't forgotten; the meeting is for later today. So I decide to play a little trick on him. I write an official looking note saying 'There is a faculty meeting today', leave it undated, and put it in Bruce's mailbox underneath several other messages, so it looks like it has been there for a day or two. When Bruce sees it he is appropriately tricked, and for an instant panics about the meeting that he has missed.

LIE

Jack leaves the following message on Jill's answering machine late one Saturday night. 'Hi Jill, it's Jack. I'm at Rick's. This place is wild. There's lots of cute girls here, but I'm just thinking about you. See you soon.' In the background loud music is playing, as if Jack were at a nightclub, indeed as if Jack were at Rick's, so Jill reasonably concludes that Jack was at Rick's when he sent the message, and hence that "here" refers to Rick's. In fact Jack was home alone, but wanted to hide this fact, so he turned the stereo up to full volume while leaving the message. Despite the fact that a reasonable and attentive member of the target audience inferred on the basis of contextual clues left by Jack that the context was Rick's, it was not. The context was Jack's house, and "here" in Jack's message referred to his house.

Weatherson's position is that the intuitive referents of demonstratives in these cases are not the ones identified by the audience as referents. In the Prank case, 'today' on the note seems to refer to the day on which it is written and read. So Weatherson, who writes the message, manages to write down a true statement when he writes 'There is a faculty meeting today'. But Bruce takes him to refer to some previous day and saying something false. In the Lie case, according to Weatherson, the intuitive referent for 'here' is Jack's house. When Jack says 'There's lots of cute girls here', he is saying something false, since there are no girls in his house. Since Jill would take 'here' to refer to Rick's house, what she takes him to say could very well be true. So, *prima facie* it seems that what a competent and attentive audience member would reasonably take the speaker to refer to is not what is referred to.

Let's consider both of these cases more carefully. Should we accept that the demonstratives in the cases refer to what Weatherson thinks they do? The proposal was that in the prank case, 'today' refers to the day on which Weatherson writes the note and puts it in the pigeonhole. However, it is not clear that it does. In order to successfully communicate using a slip and a pigeonhole, the slips ought to have dates on them or there should be a system for posting slips and emptying the pigeonhole. Otherwise the people who read the notes would hardly know

what to make of the notes. If the slip has a date on it then 'today' would intuitively refer to the date on the slip, rather than the date that the message is written, unless the date on the slip is the same as the date on which the message is written. But if there were a date on the slip, then Bruce could not be reasonably mistaken about what 'today' refers to. The case could work only if we assume that the slip is undated. If the slip is undated, then 'today' can have a determinate referent only if the pigeonholes are emptied daily. But, if Bruce did follow that custom, then he could not, again, be mistaken about what 'today' refers to.

There is a more important thing to consider about this case. There are two times that the note is read. First, Weatherson reads it while he writes it. He will reasonably take 'today' on the note to refer to the day on which he is writing the note and the faculty meeting takes place. Secondly, Bruce reads the note. When he reads it, there is no day that he can reasonably take 'today' to refer to. Since written notes can be read several times, different people can reasonably have different interpretations of the content of the message. It is not as clear as Weatherson presents it to be that 'today' on the note will always refer to the day on which the message is written.

In the case where Jack tells Jill that he is at Rick's, Weatherson claims that 'here' refers to Jack's place. If we look at what exactly Jack says, then this claim starts to look suspicious. He says, "Hi Jill, it's Jack. I'm at Rick's. This place is wild. There's lots of cute girls here." First, Jack tells Jill that he is at Rick's house. It seems that in this sequence of sentences, 'here' and 'this place' both refer anaphorically to Rick's house rather than to Jack's house. If this is so, then Jill is not misled about what 'here' refers to. Then the case does not show that the audience can be misled about what the content of a demonstrative is. However, it is open to Weatherson to change the example so that his conclusion seems more plausible. Suppose that Jill already expects Jack to be at Rick's house. Jack calls Jill and says, 'Hey, Jill, this place is wild, there are lots of cute girls here.' In this case, Jack does not mention Rick's place and it is more plausible that 'here' refers to his actual location.

But even in this case it seems doubtful that 'here' will determinately refer to Jack's house. This is evident if we consider what the interlocutors in the case would report as having been said. Imagine the conversation between Jill, Rick, and Jack.

Jill: Hey, Rick! How was your party? Jack told me that he met some nice girls at your house.

Rick: Well, he must have lied to you, because he was not at my party. As a matter of fact I know that he spent the entire night at home playing video games.

Jack: I never said I was at Rick's house!

Is Jill or Jack correct about what was Jack said? I do not think that there is one correct answer to this question. It seems incorrect to simply say that the content of Jack's utterance was that there are girls at his home. This proposal works only if we already assume that any time 'here' is used, it refers to the location of the speaker. It seems just as, if not more, plausible that what Jack said was that there were girls at Rick's party. Therefore, what 'here' refers to is indeterminate or refers to different things relative to Jill and Jack.

5 Responses

In this section, I will propose two different replies that a proponent of the audience-control theory can give to the argument from misleading and the argument from underspecification. These arguments relied on there being cases where either there is a disagreement between what the audience and the speaker can reasonably take as the referent of the demonstrative or between what different members of the audience can reasonably take to be the referent. I will argue that if there are such cases of disagreement, then these do not show that the audience-control theory is incorrect. There are two ways in which the audience-control theory can accommodate cases of referential disagreement. The proponents of the audience-control theory can either respond that in these cases it is indeterminate what the demonstrative refers to or respond that a demonstrative can refer to different things relative to different people. In the end of the section, I will assess these two responses.

Before moving on to the responses, I will make a slight change to who counts as the audience on the audience-control theory. This will be necessary to respond to these counterarguments. Both Romdenh-Romluc and Wettstein think that the audience relative to whom the content of a demonstrative is fixed must be the “individual who it is reasonable to take the speaker to be addressing” (Wettstein 1984: 74). I do not think that this restriction is essential to their theory, and will work with a looser notion of an audience. There is no good reason to restrict the audiences to just those that are addressed by the speaker. Often, it is unclear whom the speaker is addressing and often there is nobody in particular who the speaker intends to address. In the thesis, audience will be anyone who is part of the conversation. So any conversational participant who is attentive and competent counts as part of the audience. This can include the speaker herself, since when the speaker is making an utterance, she herself is a participant in the conversation. If she makes an utterance, she hears or reads it while making it.

5.1 The Indeterminacy Response

According to the first response, in cases of referential disagreement, it is indeterminate what the demonstrative refers to. Let's see how this proposal would work. In the revised version of the re-enactment case, a part of the audience reasonably takes 'now' to refer to the time of the wedding, and the other part of the audience takes 'now' to refer to 1066. Which time does 'now' semantically refer to? According to the indeterminacy response, in this kind of a case,

the audience-control theory predicts that it is indeterminate which time 'now' refers to.

Next, I will consider how this response handles the argument from underspecification and the argument from cases of misleading. According to the argument from underspecification, the audience-control theory is not a good theory, because it fails to make a clear prediction in cases where there are several things that different attentive and competent conversational participants can reasonably take to be the content of the demonstrative. According to the indeterminacy response, in these situations, the demonstrative does not have a determinate content. So according to this response, either there is only one competent and attentive audience relative to whom the referent of the demonstrative is fixed, or what the demonstrative refers to is indeterminate. So instead of failing to make a prediction, the audience-control theory makes a clear prediction: in cases where there are several things that can be reasonably taken to be the content of a demonstrative, the demonstrative does not have a determinate referent.

Now, let's see how the indeterminacy response would deal with the cases of misleading. In the lie⁷ case, Jill would take 'here' to refer to Rick's house, while Jack could take 'here' to refer to his own house, since he is in his own house. According to the indeterminacy response, what 'here' refers to is indeterminate in this case. Taking into consideration what I said about the case in the previous section, it seems that it is not as clear as Weatherson presents it to be that 'here' refers to Jack's house. Rather, it seems indeterminate what 'here' refers to – it could refer to either Jack's house or Rick's house.

In the prank case, Bruce cannot reasonably take 'today' to refer to anything. So the audience-control theory would predict that it does not refer to anything. However, there is also the intuition that 'today' refers to the day that Weatherson takes it to refer to. On the version of the audience control-theory that we are considering, Weatherson himself counts as an audience, since as I said in the previous section, he reads the message while writing it. Weatherson would reasonably take 'today' to refer to the day on which the message is written. This suggests that the audience-control theory, having adopted the indeterminacy response, would predict as the referent of 'today' in this case is indeterminate. This is because there is a disagreement between what Weatherson would reasonably take to be the content of 'today' and what Bruce would reasonably take to be its content. This result is somewhat unsatisfying. There seems to be more to be said than just that the content of 'today' is indeterminate.

⁷ Let's assume that Jill expects Jack to be at Rick's house, and Jack does not explicitly say that he is at Rick's house during the conversation.

According to this response, every time interlocutors disagree about the content of a demonstrative, not much more than that the content is indeterminate can be said. For the Prank case, there does seem to be a sense in which 'today' refers to the day on which there actually is a faculty meeting and Weatherson writes the note. The same applies to the Lie case. The indeterminacy response fails to capture the feeling that there is more to say about what 'here' refers to in that case than that it refers indeterminately. This observation grounds the second response, which I will present in the next section.

5.2 Content Relativism about Demonstratives

The second response involves an explicit rejection of an assumption that is accepted by almost every theory of demonstratives. The success of the counterarguments relies entirely on the audience-control theory subscribing to this assumption. However, it is not necessary that a proponent of the audience-control theory accepts it. The assumption is the following:

The Unique Content Assumption

For any usage event A , if a speaker s uses a demonstrative expression E , then E has at most one content x on A .

I will argue that if we give up the Unique Content Assumption, then we have means to respond to the counterarguments. According to this response, a demonstrative can refer to more than one thing at once. Given that we still want the content of a demonstrative to be fixed by a function from contexts to contents, this proposal makes sense if we take the content-fixing context to be a context of the audience rather than the context of use, since there can be only one context of use per use. But instead of talking about an audience-context, I will talk about contexts of interpretation, because there will be no unique context of audience and the audience consists of interpreters who are embedded in their own context.

To distinguish between occasions, where a demonstrative has different contents relative to different interpreters, because there is more than one usage event, and occasions where there is only one usage event, but different contents relative to different interpreters, I will make clear the distinction between a context of use and a context of interpretation. We can take the context of use to be the context in which a demonstrative is used, and to consist of factors like the speaker, time, location, and possible world. The context of interpretation is the context from which a demonstrative in a context of use is interpreted, and consists of all the

factors that can be relevant for fixing the referent of a demonstrative. Factors that are relevant for fixing the semantic content of a demonstrative are things that the interpreter reasonably takes as evidence of what the speaker intends to refer to on the assumption that the speaker is cooperative. This includes demonstrations, things previously referred to in the conversation, prominent or salient objects in the environment, expressions that the speaker uses, the linguistic constraints encoded in the demonstrative that the speaker uses, etc. The context of interpretation is a set of such relevant features, which are available to the interpreter, given her background beliefs, perceptual abilities and perspective. One thing which should be noted is that the speaker herself can count as such an interpreter. The cues that according to the audience-based theory fix what the referent is, are cues about what the speaker is meaning to say. Since this is so, the speaker, having access to her own inner speech, has a different set of evidence about what she means to refer to. Because of this, her judgment about what she refers to can differ from the audience members' interpretation.

Having drawn the distinction between a context of use and a context of interpretation, and given a preliminary conception about what a context of interpretation is, we can return to developing an audience-centric view of demonstratives which embraces interpretation-sensitivity. Content relativism about demonstratives is the view that demonstratives are interpretation-sensitive expressions. A demonstrative is interpretation-sensitive if, on a particular use, it can have one content relative to one interpreter and have another content relative to another interpreter. Adopting interpretation-sensitivity would allow to accommodate both the thesis that the content of a demonstrative is fixed by and identical to what competent and attentive audience members would reasonably take to be the referent, and the observation that what different audience members take to be the referent can differ depending on what cues are available to them and what they believe.

The semantic content of a demonstrative in a context of use is fixed by the context of interpretation. But it seems that not just any context of interpretation will be suitable as the context relative to which the demonstrative has a content. There are at least two things that should be required from the audiences whose context of interpretation can fix the referent to avoid placing excess burden on the speaker. Firstly, some audiences are incompetent in the language that is being used. For example, there might be a child who thinks 'here' always refers to her mom. When someone says, 'Come here,' she will go to her mom. She will take 'here' to refer to her mom, but that is only because she is not a competent user of English. Since she is not sufficiently familiar with the semantics of English, her judgment should not fix what the

semantic content of 'here' is.

Secondly, sometimes audiences do not pay attention to the speaker's words. For example, imagine that a history teacher is telling her class about the first world war. She begins by telling them about the assassination of Franz Ferdinand. After that, her students stop listening. The teacher regains their attention only at the end of the class when she is concluding the lesson. She says, 'On November 9th, he abdicates.' Her students will take her to refer to the assassin of Franz Ferdinand instead of the German Kaiser. Since they did not hear most of what their teacher said, the contexts of the inattentive students should not count as reference-fixing.

These considerations suggest a way to limit the range of contexts of interpretation which fix the semantic content of a demonstrative. The contexts of interpretation of inattentive and linguistically incompetent audiences should not count as content-fixing because otherwise the theory would predict that if the speaker wants to communicate only their intended content, they would have the responsibility of making themselves clear to inattentive and incompetent audiences. This does not seem to be required from speakers. Hence, we do not want our theory to have this conclusion. The conclusion can be avoided if the admissible contexts will be the contexts of interpreters who are attentive, competent speakers of the language, and evaluate available evidence reasonably. Having made the distinction between the context of use and the context of interpretation, and restricted the range of permissible contexts of interpretation, we can state the view.

Content Relativism about Demonstratives

A demonstrative d refers to x in a context of use c_u and a context of interpretation c_i iff the audience of c_i would reasonably judge x to be what the speaker of c_u intends to refer to using d .

Now, I will provide some support for it by appealing to speakers' intuitions in cases where demonstratives are used. Content Relativism about demonstratives would explain how it is possible for different audience-members to disagree about what the semantic content of a demonstrative is on a given use. In the Re-enactment case, while the context of use is the same, the context of interpretation of the members of the audience who know about re-enactments are different from the context of interpretation of those who do not, because they have different background beliefs. In the context of interpretation of an audience member who knows about the re-enactments, the fact of the re-enactment is included as a relevant

factor. Although the audience members disagree about what the semantic content of 'now' is, neither of them makes a mistake in coming to judge what they do, since their judgments are reasonably based on the evidence that is available to them.

It has been assumed that language users' intuitions about the semantic contents of demonstratives track actual semantic contents. If we can show that there are cases where reasonable, attentive and competent people disagree about what the intuitive content of a demonstrative is on a particular use, then that would support the thesis that the content of a demonstrative can be different relative to different interpreters. If the content of a demonstrative is fixed relative to the context of interpretation, then different intuitions about the content of demonstratives do not conflict with each other. All of the intuitions of competent speakers may be correct about the content of the demonstrative. While they will not be universally correct, they will be correct relative to different interpreters.

We do not need to consider what people in hypothetical cases would take the referent to be to support the claim that reasonable people can disagree about what the intuitive semantic content of a demonstrative is on a given use. Such disagreements have appeared between philosophers who theorize about the semantics of demonstratives. I will provide two examples. The first example has Stefano Predelli (2002) disagreeing with Romdenh-Romluc (2002) about what a demonstrative refers to in the Re-enactment case. In the second example, Martin Montminy (2010) and Christopher Gauker (2008) have different views on what 'that' refers to in the Tie case, which I presented in the subsection 3.3.2.

Let's consider the first example. As we already know, Romdenh-Romluc (2002) thinks that in the Re-enactment case, intuitively 'now' refers to the moment of the utterance. Predelli (2002: 312) has argued that not everyone will agree with this intuition. He claims that he does not have that intuition. Instead, his intuition seems to be that 'now' refers to the time intended by the speaker. If we accept the Unique Content Assumption, then either Romdenh-Romluc or Predelli has an intuition that fails to track semantic content. But how do we decide which one of them has an incorrect intuition about content? That would require first picking either the speaker-control theory or the audience-control theory and then rejecting all intuitions that do not conform to the theory as incorrect.

Conceiving of demonstratives as interpretation-sensitive provides a way to explain why Romdenh-Romluc and Predelli have diverging intuitions without rejecting either of the intuitions as incorrect. We can say that the context of interpretation of Romdenh-Romluc

coincides with the context of interpretation of the audience and the context of interpretation of Predelli coincides with the context of interpretation of the speaker. Both of their intuitions track semantic content according to the content relativist response.

Let's move on to the second example. Gauker (2008) and Montminy (2010) disagree with one another over what the referent of 'that' is in the Tie case. While Gauker has the intuition that 'that' refers to the tie around Harry's neck, Montminy insists that it refers to the tie that Sally had in mind. If we accept the Unique Content Assumption, then either Gauker or Montminy has an intuition that fails to track semantic content. My own intuitions are torn between the two options. There is a sense in which 'that' refers to what Harry takes it to refer to but there is also a sense in which it refers to what Sally intends to refer to. There is no objective basis on which to decide which of them is mistaken. But if content relativism about demonstratives is true, then both Gauker and Montminy can have correct intuitions relative to a context of interpretation. Accepting that demonstratives are interpretation-sensitive would allow us to retain that speakers' intuitions reliably track semantic contents. In the Tie case, Gauker's context of interpretation coincides with the hearer's and Montminy's context of interpretation coincides with the context of interpretation of the speaker.

So far, I have supported content relativism about demonstratives by showing that it can explain a feature of speakers' intuitions about cases where demonstratives are used. This feature is the fact that reasonable, attentive and competent language users sometimes disagree about what a demonstrative refers to on a given use. Next, I will show how the content relativist theory allows us to respond to the argument from cases of misleading.

According to Weatherson, the audience-control theory makes the false prediction that the audience cannot be misled about content. In section 4.2, I already cast some doubt on the conclusion that in the Prank and Lie case, the hearer or reader is mistaken about what the demonstrative refers to. In this section, I will show that even if Weatherson's assessment of what the demonstratives in the cases refer to is partially correct, it is not necessary that the audience-control theory makes an incorrect prediction. Interpretation-sensitivity can be used to explain what is going on in the cases. The misleading cases are compatible with the audience being correct about the content of the utterance. The sense that in these two examples, the audience is being misled in some way need not stem from the audience being misled about *content*. Rather, they are misled about what the world is like.

To see how content relativism deals with Weatherson's examples, let's first apply content

relativism to the Prank case. It seems that since the note is not dated, there is no specific day that Bruce could reasonably take 'today' to refer to. So, relative to Bruce's context of interpretation, 'today' does not refer to anything. Relative to Weatherson's context of interpretation however, 'today' refers to the day on which it is produced, since when Weatherson considers the sentence he has written from his own context of interpretation, given the information he has, that is the most reasonable thing to conclude. Our intuition is that 'today' refers to the day on which the message is read, and that is true, relative to Weatherson's context of interpretation. Since the message is placed under other mail, Bruce is unable to figure out which day Weatherson intended to refer to, and is misled into believing that there was a faculty meeting on some previous day. But at the same time, Bruce is not misled about what the content of 'today' is, since 'today' fails to refer relative to his context of interpretation. Our intuition that 'today' refers to the day on which the message is written is explained fact that relative to Weatherson's context of interpretation 'today' has a referent and that is the day on which the message is written. But this intuition becomes less strong, if we consider the fact that such slips could not be used to successfully communicate without the slips either having dates on them or there being a system in place which requires that the pigeonholes are emptied daily.

Even though Bruce is not misled about the content of 'today', there does seem to be some misleading going on in the situation. But if Bruce is not being misled about semantic content then what is he being misled about? The misleading aspect of the situation comes in just because the producer of the message does something to deliberately sidetrack Bruce about what the world is like. When Weatherson writes 'There is a faculty meeting today' on a piece of paper and places it under older mail, he makes Bruce believe that he has missed a faculty meeting. So he misleads Bruce about the time of the meeting. The explanation does not require that the misleading take place on the semantic level. For Bruce to be misled about the time of the meeting, it is not required that 'today' semantically refers to *only* the day that Weatherson writes the note.

To see this, we may imagine a similar case, where the audience is misled, but not about what the semantic content of a demonstrative is, since the hearer recognizes the intended referent as the semantic referent. Suppose that instead of writing 'There is a faculty meeting today', Weatherson writes 'There is a faculty meeting tomorrow', and places it on top of Bruce's unread mail. Weatherson deliberately says something that he believes to be false and intends to mislead Bruce. As a result, Bruce thinks that there is a faculty meeting on the next day.

Weatherson has managed to mislead Bruce about the time of the meeting, although they would agree on what the content of 'tomorrow' is.

Let's return to the original description of the Prank case. It seems that Bruce and Weatherson disagree about what the referent of 'today' is. Bruce could complain to someone and say, 'I just found a note saying that there was a faculty meeting, but it was unspecific about the time' Weatherson could say, 'I left a note in Bruce's mail saying that there's a faculty meeting today.' This is a case of disagreement, because Weatherson believes that there is a faculty meeting on the day he wrote the note, while Bruce does not believe that. Bruce would not be misled about the reference of 'today', because it does not refer to anything relative to his context. He would reasonably think that he has missed a meeting, but he would not think that because he is wrong about what 'today' refers to. Rather, he thinks he has missed the meeting because all the evidence available to him tells him that there was a meeting earlier in the week. There is no need to appeal to him having misunderstood what 'today' refers to. He would be correct in thinking that for him, 'today' refers to nothing.

Next, let's turn to the second example – the Lie case – and apply content relativism to it. In the example, Jack tells Jill, 'There are a lot of cute girls here.'⁸ If demonstratives are interpretation-sensitive, then relative to a reasonable interpreter who knows that Jack is at home, 'here' refers to Jack's house. Jack himself is such an interpreter. But relative to Jill, who has every reason to think that Jack is at Rick's house, 'here' refers to Rick's house. There are two reasonable interpretations of 'here' and therefore two different semantic contents. But there is still a sense in which Jill has been misled. She is misled about the location of Jack, because Jack takes pains to mislead her, lying and playing loud music. Jill need not additionally be misled about the content of 'here'. Speech reports can be used to support the claim that relative to Jack and Jill, 'here' refers to different locations.

What would the interlocutors themselves report about their exchange? Jack could say, 'I told Jill that there were some cute girls with me.' By this, he would report that the content of his utterance was that there were cute girls at his location – which at the time of the utterance was his home. Jill, on the other hand, could tell someone, 'Jack told me that he met some girls he fancied at Rick's place.' In that, she would report Jack as having said that there were cute girls at Rick's house. So it seems that there can be a disagreement between Jack and Jill about what 'here' refers to. Content relativism about demonstratives allows us to explain how such

⁸ Again, in order to make Weatherson's argument stronger, let's suppose that Jill already expects Jack to be at Rick's house and that Jack does not say, 'I'm at Rick's.'

disagreements about content are possible.

In conclusion, it seems that the modified audience-control theory can deal with cases where a speaker uses demonstratives to mislead somebody without giving up the assumption that an attentive and competent audience cannot be misled about the *content* of the demonstrative. When someone uses a demonstrative to mislead, the interpreter need not be misled about what the demonstrative refers to if they are misled about what the world is like.

5.3 Assessment of the Responses: Resolving Disagreements

In this section, will assess the two responses by considering how well the responses can handle observations about how disagreements are resolved.

Firstly, if content relativism is correct, then it should turn out that once content relativism is introduced to the people who are disagreeing about what the content of a demonstrative is in a context of use, they should cease disagreeing and adopt the view that they are both correct relative to their own context of interpretation, because that is the view that captures the most facts about the situation. Let's consider the Tie case again. According to content relativism about demonstratives, 'that' refers to the tie around Harry's neck relative to Harry's context and to the tie two ties back relative to Sally's context of interpretation. Suppose that Harry and Sally were to find out that they take 'that' to refer to different things. Given that content is relative, once they find out that the other party takes 'that' to have a different content, they should accept that there is no unique thing that 'that' refers to on that use. That is, by coming to believe that there is a disagreement about content, it would be reasonable to resolve the disagreement by concluding that content is relative. However, it is possible that if Harry and Sally find out that they take 'that' to refer to different things, then instead of accepting that there are several reasonable interpretations, they continue disagreeing.

Let's use a dialogue that Jonas Åkerman devised about the same case as an example of this.

Harry: I decided to buy the pink-and-green tie because you said it matches my new jacket.

Sally: I never said that. I was talking about the yellow tie, which you tried on two ties before the pink-and-green one.

Harry: I don't care which tie you really had in mind. I bought the pink-and-green one because of what you *said*. It's all your fault! (Åkerman 2015: 495)

Content relativism entails that both Harry and Sally are correct when they state what was said relative to their own contexts of interpretation. But Harry and Sally seem to disagree about which the unique content 'that' had even after it is revealed that they took content to be different.

One response would be that Harry and Sally do not understand what exactly they are disagreeing about. I agree with Åkerman (2015: 495), who argues these kinds of disagreements in cases where communication has been unsuccessful are more about distributing blame for the consequences of the conversation than they are about semantic content. In this case, they are disagreeing about whose fault it is that Harry bought an ugly tie.

The second problem with content relativism is that people can think their earlier judgments at about the semantic content of an utterance was mistaken. Let's consider the prank case again. Let the time when Bruce first reads the message, be t_1 , and the time he finds out when the meeting actually is, be t_2 . At t_2 , Bruce should think that at t_1 , the content of 'today' was different than it is on t_2 . However, it is plausible that he will think that 'today' always had the same content. At t_2 , Bruce could think that 'today' always referred to the day on which Weatherson wrote the note, even when he took it to not refer at all at t_1 . There are two ways to respond to this problem. Firstly, it can be stated that when an interpreter, by gaining new evidence about what the speaker intended to refer to, adopts a new context of interpretation, they will evaluate the demonstrative in a context of use retrospectively, so that their interpretation is consistent in time. However, this might strike one as an *ad hoc* solution. Secondly, it might be that speakers are incompetent in making meta-judgments about how the content of a demonstrative can change in time. That would mean that Bruce's judgment about what the content of 'today' at t_1 was should not be trusted at t_2 . I am not sure that this is a good solution either. This is a challenge for content relativism about demonstratives that should be addressed. However, due to the length restrictions on this thesis, I am not able to explore this question to the full extent.

Considerations about how disagreements about content are resolved do not seem to be such a challenge for the indeterminacy response. As was shown in the case where Harry and Sally disagree with each other (described above), interlocutors can have an argument about what the content of a demonstrative is on a particular use. In the example, the interlocutors go on disagreeing after the disagreement is revealed. This would not show that the indeterminacy response is incorrect, because the speakers are disagreeing about what it is reasonable to take

to have been said. Although there is no fact of the matter of what was said, there are facts of the matter about what the interlocutors think is reasonably taken as having been said. Hence the disagreement. The continuing disagreement does not show that there is a determinate content in this case.

It is also possible that in some cases, the revelation resolves the disagreement and the interlocutors converge on a content. Often, the content that they would converge on is the content that the speaker intended to express. Would this show that the indeterminacy response fails? No, because even if further investigation reveals the speaker's referential intention, that does not make the semantic content at the time of the utterance determinate and identical to the intended content. Settling what the speaker intended to say at the time of his utterance does not settle the content of his utterance. So, even if interlocutors converge on a content at a later time, it does not show that this was the determinate content all along.

Considerations about how disagreements are resolved seem to favour the indeterminacy response over content relativism about demonstratives. This is because in order to explain what is going on when interlocutors discover that there is a disagreement about what the content of a demonstrative is on a particular use, content relativism has two options which are worse than the indeterminacy response. It either needs to come up with a more complicated explanation than the indeterminacy response or needs to say that some of language users' judgments are mistaken.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have defended the audience-control theory against the counterarguments that have been presented against it. According to the audience-control theory, the semantic content of a demonstrative in a context is what an attentive and competent interpreter would reasonably take to be its semantic content, based on the cues that she can take the speaker to be exploiting. So far, the counterarguments have not been responded to by the proponents of the theory. For this reason, as things currently stand, the theory looks defeated. The aim has been to show that the counterarguments can be responded to.

Altogether I have considered five counterarguments to the audience-control theory. Three of these arguments – the argument from dispensability of audiences, the argument from reliance on conventions, and the undermotivation arguments – can be responded to by relying on the means that the audience-control theory already has. The two remaining arguments present a more fundamental challenge to the audience-control theory. These are what I have called the argument from underspecification and the argument from cases of misleading.

I have developed two novel solutions which help the audience-control theory to respond to the two remaining arguments. According to the analysis of this paper, these problems stem from there being cases where there is a disagreement between what different conversational participants can reasonably take to be the referent of a demonstrative in a given context of use. According to the first solution – the indeterminacy response – in those cases, the content of the demonstrative is indeterminate. According to the second solution – content relativism about demonstratives – on those occasions, the demonstrative can have one content relative to one conversational participant, and another content relative to another conversational participant. I have presented how each of these responses deals with the counterarguments. I have also assessed these theories by considering how well they can handle cases where the disagreement between what the interlocutors take to be the content of the demonstrative is revealed. Such cases seem to favour the indeterminacy response over content relativism about demonstratives. However, content relativism about demonstratives can better capture what is going on in the disagreement situation before the disagreement is revealed.

The thesis has achieved two things. Firstly, it has contributed to the exploration of what the theoretical potential of content relativism is. Secondly, the thesis has widened the range of available theories of demonstratives and has been one step towards placing the audience-

control theory on par with the speaker-control theory by responding to the counterarguments that have been presented against it. If the audience-control theory will adopt either of the solutions that were proposed in the thesis, then it is in a much better position than it was before. With that being said, there is certainly future work to be done on the audience-control theory. For example, the notions of reasonable interpretation and competence require further elaboration.

Abstract

According to the audience-control theory of demonstratives, the content of a demonstrative in a context is what an attentive and competent audience would reasonably take to be its content in the context. In this thesis, I will respond to the arguments that have been made against the this theory, and have not been responded in the literature. Three of these arguments can be responded to by relying the existing framework of the audience-control theory, worked out by Wettstein (1984) and Romdenh-Romluc (2002, 2004). Responding to the two remaining requires specifying what the theory would predict in cases where the interlocutors could disagree about what the content of a demonstrative is. In the thesis, I will develop two ways to make this specification. According to the first response, in these cases, the content of the demonstrative is indeterminate, and according to the second response, the demonstrative has different content relative to different audience members. The thesis concludes by assessing these two responses by considering how they handle situations where disagreements about what a demonstrative refers to are revealed.

References

- Åkerman, J. (2015). The communication desideratum and theories of indexical reference. *Mind & Language*, 30(4), 474-499.
- Braun, D. (1996). Demonstratives and their linguistic meanings. *Nôus*, 30(2), 145-173.
- Cappelen, H., & Lepore, E. (2008). *Insensitive semantics: A defence of semantic minimalism and speech act pluralism*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Cohen, J. (2013). Indexicality and the Puzzle of the Answering Machine. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 110(1), 5-32.
- Cohen, J., & Michaelson, E. (2013). Indexicality and the answering machine paradox. *Philosophy Compass*, 8(6), 580-592.
- Corazza, E., & Fish, W. J. Gorvett: 2002, 'Who Is I?'. *Philosophical Studies*, 107(1), 1-21.
- Gauker, C. (2008). Zero tolerance for pragmatics. *Synthese*, 165(3), 359-371.
- Gidwani, T. (2017). Indexicals and the character shifting theory. Manuscript in preparation. Retrieved August 12, 2017, from <https://goo.gl/dyYVHh>
- Gorvett, J. (2005). Back through the looking glass: On the relationship between intentions and indexicals. *Philosophical Studies*, 124(3), 295-312.
- Kaplan, D. (1978). Dthat. *Syntax and semantics*, 9, 221-243.
- Kaplan, D. (1989) Demonstratives. In Almog, Joseph, John Perry and Howard Wettstein, eds. *Themes From Kaplan*. New York: Oxford University Press, 481-563.
- Michaelson, E. (2014). Shifty characters. *Philosophical Studies*, 167(3), 519-540.

- Montminy, M. (2010). Context and communication: A defence of intentionalism. *Journal of pragmatics*, 42(11), 2910-2918.
- Mount, A. (2008). The impurity of “pure” indexicals. *Philosophical Studies*, 138(2), 193-209.
- Predelli, S. (2002). Intentions, indexicals and communication. *Analysis*, 62(276), 310-316.
- Recanati, F. (2004). *Literal meaning*. Cambridge University Press.
- Recanati, F. (2001) Are 'here' and 'now' indexicals?. *Texte*, 127(8), 115-127.
- Romdenh-Romluc, K. (2002). Now the French are Invading England!. *Analysis*, 62(1), 34-41.
- Romdenh-Romluc, K. (2004). I. *Philosophical Studies*, 128(2), 257-283.
- Sidelle, A. (1991). The answering machine paradox. *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 21(4), 525-539.
- Weatherson, B. (2002). Misleading indexicals. *Analysis*, 62(4), 308-310.
- Wettstein, H. K. (1984). How to Bridge the Gap Between Meaning and Reference. *Synthese*, 58(1), 63-84.

Non-exclusive licence to reproduce thesis and make thesis public

I, Triinu Eesmaa,

1. herewith grant the University of Tartu a free permit (non-exclusive licence) to:
 - 1.1. reproduce, for the purpose of preservation and making available to the public, including for addition to the DSpace digital archives until expiry of the term of validity of the copyright, and
 - 1.2. make available to the public via the web environment of the University of Tartu, including via the DSpace digital archives until expiry of the term of validity of the copyright,

Demonstratives and the Audience-Control Theory,

supervised by Alexander Stewart Davies,

2. I am aware of the fact that the author retains these rights.
3. I certify that granting the non-exclusive licence does not infringe the intellectual property rights or rights arising from the Personal Data Protection Act.



Triinu Eesmaa
Tartu, 14.08.2017