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## WALTER DE MULDER - LILIANE TASMOWSKI

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## Pragmatic Aspects of the Use of Pronouns in *Wh*-Questions

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**Abstract.** This paper focuses on the ways Dutch speakers use pronouns in order to refer to the topic entity of *wh*-questions. It appears that, when they have the choice between a third-person pronoun or a demonstrative pronoun, they prefer the latter; however, in the answers given to *wh*-questions, the same discourse entity is normally referred to by means of a third-person pronoun. This phenomenon is usually accounted for by the recency principle, which predicts that a speaker accomplishes topical continuity by using a third-person pronoun. However, even when a discourse entity was already thematic over a long stretch of talk, speakers normally refer to it by means of a demontrative pronoun if it is the topic of a *wh*-question. Therefore, it is argued that the sequential function of the utterance as a whole may govern the selection of the coding devices through which reference is made to discourse entitites. This hypothesis would explain why the topic entity of a reported *wh*-question is usually referred to by means of a third-person pronoun.

## 1    Introduction[1]

The selection of a particular type of device to formulate discourse entities is usually accounted for at two levels of analysis: (i) the level of referential accessibility, or *topic continuity*; and (ii) the level of thematic relevance or relative prominence of a discourse entity (*cf.* Givón 1990, Ch.20).

• *ad (i). referential accessibility*
With respect to referential accessibility, the distance between the current use of an entity and its last occurrence in the preceding discourse is looked at (*cf.* Givón 1983a, Duranti & Ochs 1979, Brown & Yule 1983, or Ariel 1990). The general principle is that the more recently an entity is made available in the discourse and the fewer competing entities intervene between its current use and its last mentioning, the less coding material is needed to make that entity identifiable. In other words, the more difficulties a speaker expects his recipient to have identifying a particular referent, the higher the probability of the selection of an

element further to the right side of the following scale (adapted from Givón 1983a: 18 and Givón 1993: 913; simplified):

(1)    zero      >  weak      > strong     > unreduced  >  left-dislocated
       anaphora   pronouns   pronouns     definite NPs    definite NPs

• *ad (ii). thematic relevance*
Whereas topic continuity deals with the methods through which referents might be kept identifiable, the primary concern of thematic relevance is discourse structure. At this level, such factors as the thematic status of a discourse entity, shift of perspective, or type of thematic progression play a role.

Karmiloff-Smith (1985), for example, describes how children tend to discern between primary and secondary antagonists in stories by formulating the former pronominally and the latter through unreduced definite NP's. In a research which is particularly interesting for the analysis in this paper, Fox (1987) has shown that transition to a new thematic episode is often marked through the use of a nominal anaphor, even if its referent had been unambiguously identifiable in case a pronoun had been used. On the other hand, a pronoun may be used to refer to an entity as long as the thematic unit it occurs in is not already closed. This is possible even when the textual distance to former mentions of that referent is relatively large, and despite the occurrence of competing referents in intervening side-sequences.

The analytic scope of the first type of account is restricted to the referential level, whereas the second concerns the level of the thematic organization of discourse. The proposals made in this paper can be seen as an extension of the kind of phenomena which have to be looked at within the second dimension. I shall look particularly at the relation between thematic structure and sequential organization. It will be shown that examination of naturally occurring interactional data necessitates the inclusion of sequential organization into the analysis.

## 2.    The phenomenon

Let me first give an impression of the phenomenon I want to look at. Please see the following fragment from a research interview:[2]

(2)    (LC/j)

| 34 | A: → | en je ↑va:der, | and your father, |
| 35 | → | waar we̲r↑:kt ↑die | where does 'he_DEM' [that one] work? |
| 36 | | (.) | (.) |
| 37 | B: | (th) RA̲bo↑bank | (th) RA̲bo↑bank |
| 38 | | (.) | (.) |
| 39 | A: | (◦de) Rabobank | (◦the) Rabobank |
| 40 | | (.) | (.) |
| 41 | A: * | wat do̲et(t)ie da̲↑ar | what does he_PERS do there |

The question turn in lines 34-35 contains two turn-constructional units: a preliminary *topic-introduction unit* and the *question-delivery unit* itself. In the topic-introduction unit, a new entity is brought into the discourse by a full, non-reduced definite noun phrase (*your father*). In the question delivery unit (*where does 'he' work*), this entity is coded through a pronominal expression, – in this case a substantival *demonstrative* pronoun (*die*: roughly equivalent to '*that one*'[3]). The same speaker then uses a *personal* pronoun to refer to that same entity in her next question turn (ln.41: *what does 'he' do there*; '*ie*': clitic *he*).

The first observation is not independent of the second: the introduction of a new entitity through a full NP in the first question turn allows for its pronominal formulation as a *given* entity in the subsequent discourse. The puzzling thing is not so much the fact that the speaker uses a pronoun to formulate this entity, but rather the *type* of pronoun which is used to do the job. The observation that has to be accounted for is the selection of a demonstrative pronoun in one case (the first interrogative clause), and a personal pronoun in another (the next one). In this paper, I shall focus upon the factors that govern the selection of either a third-person personal pronoun, or a demonstrative pronoun in interrogative *wh*-clauses.

## 3.    The recency principle

Before reviewing how this kind of phenomenon is analysed in Dutch grammar, I will try to characterize the functional difference between third-person personal pronouns and demonstrative expressions. According to Ehlich (1979 and 1982), the use of a *deictic* pronoun – such as demonstrative pronouns or adverbs – can be seen as an instruction to move the entity pointed to into focus. On the other hand, a *phoric* pronoun – such as third-person personal pronouns – instrues the recipient to maintain an already evoked entity.

One could say that an *anaphoric* expression *represents* another expression which is used earlier in the discourse (or later, in the case of *cataphoric* uses). An anaphoric expression is co-referential because it functions as an instruction to bind it to an antecedent. It accomplishes co-referentiality *via* a textual relation or *text-link* (*cf.* Fillmore 1982: 261). Anaphoric pronouns formulate an entity as a textually given object which can be maintained without actually focusing upon it again.

On the other hand, a deictic expression accomplishes co-referentiality *via* a *knowledge-link* (*ibid.*). It *points* to a situationally or textually available entity which the recipient should bring into focus. Therefore, the *text-deictic* use of a demonstrative could be regarded as an instruction to move attention to an entity which is accessible in the 'text-space' the speaker assumes to share with the hearer.

This characterization of the functional difference between phoric and deictic expressions is partly compatible with the prevailing account for the use of pronouns in Dutch grammar. The selection of demonstrative and personal pronouns is said to correlate with the *degree of recency* with which the antecedent has been introduced into the discourse (*cf.* Overdiep 1949 and Geerts *et al.* 1984). Dutch speakers code an entity that is recently introduced with a substantival demonstrative pronoun. On the other hand, they code continuity of that same entity through the use of a personal pronoun. I shall call this account the *recency principle*:

(3)    *Overdiep (1949): the recency principle*

full NP > demonstrative pronoun > personal pronoun[4]

A remarkable property of this scale is the tendency to focus first on a newly introduced entity with the demonstrative pronoun before maintaining it with a personal pronoun. The introduction of a new entity through a full noun phrase provides an opportunity to change the current thematic line. However, such a change is first anchored by focusing on the new entity with a demonstrative expression. Its status as the new *thematic entity* – or *discourse topic* (henceforth: *D-topic*) – somehow has to be established by the use of a focusing device. Only then may it be carried on as a thematic entity through the use of a more representational device.[5]

Table (4) summarizes the essential functional conditions of the pattern described in (3):

(4)    *selection conditions according to the recency principle*

*   introduction of a new entitity:    - full, unreduced NP
*   establishment as current           - substantival demonstrative PRO:
    discourse-topic:                      *die / dat* ['that one']
*   use as thematic entity:            - personal pronoun:
                                          *hij / zij / het / zij (pl.) / + ?er*
                                          he / she / it / they   / ['there']

The recency principle thus operates both at the level of the grammar of referential coherence (level (i) in section 2) and it fulfils text-organizing functions (level ii): the use of the demonstrative pronoun proposes to treat a recently introduced entity as the actual D-topic.

At first sight, the recency principle seems to fit perfectly well with the data we have seen in fragment (2). In line 35, the questioner first refers to the newly introduced entity (the father) with a demonstrative (ln.34). In the next question/answer sequence, both she and the answerer use a personal pronoun to refer to that same entity:

(5)    *the recency principle as observable in fragment (2)*

- introduction of a new entity:       *je vader*      [your father] (line 34)
- establishment as new D-topic:        $die_{DEM}$      ['that one'] (line 35)
- use as thematic entity:             $\{\ ie_{PERS}$      [he (clitic)] (line 41)
                                         $\ hij_{PERS}$   [he (unstressed)] (line 44)

Moreover, the recency principle appears to account appropriately for the pronominal coding of more than one given entity in a clause. See, for example, the clause-internal structuring of given information which is observable in the continuation of fragment (2):

(6)    (LC/j) [continuation of (2)]

```
41   A: → wat doet(t)ie da↑ar              what does he_PERS do there_DEM
42          0,4                             0.4
43   B:    >chef:. algemene:-              chief general-
44          nou algemene dienst=           well general services
45   B:    =dus hij heb de< >leiding       so he's in charge
46          van die eh:                    of that eh:
47          0,3                             0.3
48   B:    ↓ja van die afdeling dus:=      well. of that department, you know
49   A:    =van die [afdeling op de bank.  of that [department of the bank.
50   B:              [chief                          [chief
51          (.)                             (.)
52   B:    of groepsleiding                or groupmanager
53          noemen ze 't ook wel.          they are calling it sometimes as well
54          (.)                             (.)
55   A:    j↑a                             yes,
56          0,5                             0.5

57   A: → heeft ie daarvoor gelee↑:rd      did he_PERS get a training for that_DEM
58          0,4                             0.4
59   B:    nee.                            no.
```

The interrogative clauses in lines 41 and 54 both contain a succession of two pronominal expressions: *he* and *there* in line 41, and in line 54 *he* and *that* (literally [*there-for*]). In each case, the entity which is already thematically established is formulated through a personal pronoun (*he*: 'the father' of the interviewee; see lns.34-35 in fragment 2). The entities introduced in the preceding turn are pointed to with a demonstrative pronominal expression. In accordance with the recency principle, the 'father' is no longer presented as an entity which has to be given focus to establish it thematically. It is maintained as a relevant, explicitly mentioned background entity, – that is to say, 'he' is still *thematic*. On the other hand, the questioner establishes the thematic prominence of another, now recently introduced entity through the use of a demonstrative. This entity is somehow presented as the primary *topic entity* of the clause, the entity the question is actually 'about'.

The speaker not only has means to indicate the degree of recency with which an entity is introduced into the discourse. She also structures her utterances with respect to local relevancy and the dynamics of thematic progression. The coding of 'the father' as thematic entity allows to structure the topical part with respect to both local topical prominence and degree of recency. This entity is moved to and maintained in the background the moment it is represented with a personal pronoun. It provides the ground with respect to which another given entity may be foregrounded as the topic entity through the use of a demonstrative.

However, in spite of the appropriateness of the recency principle at first sight, I nonetheless did come across several instances where speakers seem to violate the recency principle. Compare fragment (7):

(7)    (NL/9)

```
56   B: *  ik heb gewoon 't idee dat ze    I just have the impression that she_PERS
57          liever zwarte vriende had.=    preferred black friends

58   B: *  =dat z[e me gewoon 'n beetje    that s[he_PERS just got rid of me
59   A:           [jah,                          [yes
60   B:    geloost heeft,
61   B:    maar voor de rest e:h           but otherwise u:h
62          0.4                             0.4
63   B:    kan me niet e::h indenkeh dat   I can't imagine that
64          * ik [ruzie (met 'r) heb gehad. I had an [argument with her_PERS
65   A:          [onee                            [ono
66          0.8                             0.8
67   B:    ben me d'r niet van bewust      I'm not aware of that
68          ten↑minste[h,                  as far as I [know
69   A:              [(ojoah)                          [(oyes)
70          0.9                             0.9
71   B:    (ojoah,)                        (oyes,)
72          (.)                             (.)

73   A:    maar hoe kende-                 but how did you know-
74      → kende je die van de:h-          did you know her_DEM [that one] from the:uh-
75         van de ulo:                     from the:uh- from the ulo (schooltype)
```

The participants talk about a former girlfriend of the interviewee. In the lines marked with an asterisk, this entity is represented by a personal pronoun (*she* and *her*). However, in the question-turn in lines 72-74 the interviewer selects a demonstrative pronoun to refer to the same entity.

The order in which the pronouns are used deviates from the predictions made by the recency principle. The principle alone does not account in a sufficient way for the serial selection of distinct types of pronominal forms. Some other principles may play a role as well. In the next sections I shall propose two other principles to account for this kind of deviation from the recency principle. The first principle operates at the level of the sequential organization of thematic structure (section 4). The second one deals primarily with the sequential status of one class of utterances in which demonstrative pronouns are used (section 5).

## 4.    Marking topic shifts

In fragment (7), the thematic relation of the question turn to the preceding talk is already giving a cue as to what kind of other principle it might be oriented towards in selecting a demonstrative pronoun. The question in lines 72-74 redirects the thematic flow of the talk. Instead of continuing the talk about the causes of the estrangement between the interviewee and his former schoolfriend, the interviewer inquires to how they got acquainted:

(7)   (NL/9) [detail]

```
72   A:    maar hoe kende-                but how did you know-
73       → kende je die van de:h-         did you know her_DEM [that one] from the:uh-
74         van de ulo:                    from the ulo ((schooltype))
```

Two other design features of the turn in question confirm the idea that the interviewer indeed is proposing a kind of thematic shift. The first one is the use of the conjunction *maar* ('*but*', ln.72). Dutch '*but*' may be used at the level of discourse structure as a sequential conjunction. It then signals a deviation from contextually expectable courses of thematic development such as continuation of the current D-topic (*cf.* Redeker 1994).

The second design feature concerns the self-repairs: the redesign of the question format from *how did you know-* to *did you know* (ln.72-73) and the hitch after *from the:uh-* followed by a repeat which retraces this phrase from the preposition (*from the ulo*, ln.73-74). This kind of self-repair seems to be a systematically relevant design feature of "first sentences in topic-initial turns or in topic shift position" (Schegloff 1979: 270).

The use of a demonstrative pronoun might thus take part in the set of devices through which a speaker achieves a specific type of topical movement. On the one hand, thematic continuity is displayed by the use of a device which presupposes the maintenance of an already evoked and contextually available entity (the use of a pronoun). On the other hand, the change in thematic status of that entity is marked —along with the use of other devices— through the selection of a particular type of pronoun. In other words, the use of the demonstrative pronoun marks a redirection of the talk. At the same time, it displays that this development is only a *topic shift*, not a *topic change*.[6]

Fragment (8) shows another candidate instance of this kind of discourse-structuring use of the demonstrative pronoun. In line 932, the interviewer maintains the thematic status of collecting stamps through the use of a personal pronoun (*it*). He then subsequently refers to this same activity with the demonstrative pronoun *that* in the question in lines 936-37 (albeit through a *lazy* use of the pronoun; *cf.* Kempson 1988). Although this entity was already thematic and thus could be coded with a personal pronoun according to the recency principle, it is yet referred to with the demonstrative:

(8)   (NL/9) [*A: and B: talk about collecting stamps*]

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914  A:   >verder zei je iets van-       you also said something about-
915  A:   <iets heel o+anders, maar to-  something completely different, but the-
916  A:   >in die tijd had ('k) nog 'n   those days (I) still had a
917  A:   postzhegelverzhamheling °of zo, stamp collection, or the like,
918       0,3                            0.3
919  A:   klopt +dat                     is that correct?
920       (.)                            (.)
921  B:   j:+ah                          yes
922  A: * ·hh (en) wanneer was d+at      (and) when this_DEM ['that'] has been?
923       (.)                            (.)
924  A:   °weet/je daar e:h=             do you remember that ['there'] u:h=
925  B:   =nou+: dat is e+:h             =well, that's u:h
926       0,3                            0.3
927  B:   al 'n hele tijd °gelede (.)    already a long time ago (.)
928       dat 'k e:h                     that I u:h
929       0,3                            0.3
930  A:   nou+ah je (hemhh)              well (yes), you (humhh)
931       0,2                            0.2
```
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932  A: → ik heb 'n broer die 't nog doet   I've got a brother who still does it_PERS
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933       °hohohreheh·hH= ((laughing))   ((laughs))
934  B:   =nee+:                         no:.
935  B:   ik e:[h (jah ik heb nooit goed-)  I e:[h (well I have never had enough-)
936  A:        [wanneer- (weet je) ongeveer     [when- (do you know) roughly
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```
937  A: → wanneer dat wa+:s=            when this_DEM ['that'] has been?
```
```
938  B:   =geduld niet vo[or            patience f[or (it)
939  A:                  [nie voor.               [not for.
940       (.)                           (.)
941  A:   nee.                          no.
942       0,6                           0.6
943  B:   nou 't is wel 'n paar jaar    well it is indeed some years
944       gelede alle+:h                ago already,
945       0,2                           0.2
946  A:   ja+:h                         yes.
```

In this case, however, it is not a topic-shift which is marked through the use of the demonstrative pronoun. In the question turn in line 937, the speaker rather proposes to return from a *side sequence* (Jefferson 1972) by retrieving the question he has asked earlier (ln.922). After the interviewer has initiated a side sequence in an environment in which the respondent seems to be hesitant to give a straight answer (ln.930-32), he forwards a return to the main line of the interaction by repeating his question.

The pattern thus appears to be more generally: demonstrative pronouns may be used to mark a shift in the thematic status of an already evoked discourse entity across sequential boundaries. This kind of use displays both topic continuity and a move at the level of the sequential organization of thematic relations. A thematic entity is refocused deictically to redirect the topical development of the talk.

Evidence from conversational repair also corroborates that the use of a demonstrative on occasions of thematic shift is a preferred option indeed. In the fragment below, an unclear formulation of the topic entity in the question in line

318 is made unequivocally recognizable as a demonstrative pronoun in a subsequent correction (ln.321):

(9)   [B2.2/hp&hm][7]

```
310   A:   weet jeh, >op me ouwe school ↑hè    you know, at my old school, you know,
311        0.3                                 0.3
312   A:   daar zat zo'n go:zer                there was this lad
313        en die(ie-)=                        and him_DEM [that one]
314        =die mocht ik niet ↓zo:h.           him_DEM [that one] I didn't like very much.
315        0.3                                 0.3
316   A:   en da was heel grappig:             and that was very funny
317        [(want e:h)                         [(because u:h)
318   B: * [(°hoe heet(t)ieh)                  [(°how is [he / that one] called?
319        0.5                                 0.5
320   A:   ↑wat=                               what?
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321   B: → =°en hoe heette die                 and how was 'he_DEM' [that one] called
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```
322        (.)                                 (.)
323   A:   [Sebastiaan]                        [Sebastian]
```

In line 320 participant A initiates a repair by asking *what* B has said in the prior turn. B obviously analyses A's troubles primarily as an acoustic problem. She repeats her previous utterance a little louder but also modifies it slightly. The finite verb is given *past tense* in the corrected version of the question. Instead of the present tense *heet* (ln.318) the questioner now is using the past tense *heet-te* (ln.321). A consequence of this shift in time reference is that the pronoun is now unequivocally recognizable as a demonstrative pronoun.[8]

When participants repair (a part of) an utterance, the correction provides an indication of the kind of analysis the speaker has made of the nature of the *trouble source* (*cf.* Schegloff *et al.* 1977, or Pomerantz 1984). In this case, the repair of the topic entity's coding might be a side effect of what the questioner sees as the problem with his previous utterance. The correction nonetheless also exhibits a preference for a demonstrative formulation of the entity in question.

As was the case with the side sequence in (8), the repair initiation redirects the thematic development of the talk. The repair sequence suspends the delivery of the story the teller has projected in the preface in lines 310-17. And again a demonstrative is used in the utterance that initiates the redirection of the current line of talk.

Along with other shift devices, the use of a demonstrative pronoun may mark a redirection of the current thematic line.[9] Whereas the use of a personal pronoun would signal the maintenance of a discourse entity, a demonstrative might mark a shift of its thematic status. The selection of a particular type of pronoun is not only governed by considerations with respect to referential

accessibility. It also might be chosen because of its discourse structuring contribution at the level of both sequential and thematic organization:

"(...) it is the structural relation of the utterance to the preceding context that determines patterns of anaphora, and not surface-given facts like topic continuity or referent ambiguity" (Fox 1987: 56).

## 5.    Marking the sequential status of discourse entities

Despite the plausibility of the analysis presented in the previous section, it does not account for all deviations from the recency principle in my corpus. In some cases, for example, it is unclear whether an orientation to the redirection principle is really responsible for the selection of a deictic device.

See fragment (10). The 'in-between' status of the questions in lines 58-60 is already explicitly marked in the preliminaries in line 52-57. Besides, if there is a candidate expression which might do the job of marking the redirection of the talk, this probably would be the demonstrative adverb in the pre-formulation in line 57 (*daarover*: '*there-about*'). In the question paraphrase in line 60, the interviewer nevertheless redesigns the wordings of his question in such a way that the deictic *daarmee* ('*there-with*') is preferred above the phoric '*r* (phoric '*there*'; ln.58):

(10)   (NJK/13)

```
52   A:   EN: (0,3) ((coughs)) (0,4)    and (0.3) ((coughs)) (0.4)
53        ik heb verde↑r: (0,3)         further I don't want to (0.3)
54        (ga-) heb ik 't niet          I (am-) don't talk
55        over oud papi↑er en zo        about used paper and the like
56        °↑maar ·hh eve:h (0,3) ·hh    but just e:h.(0.3)
```
```
57    →   toch om daarover te vrage=    just to ask about that_DEM [there-about]
58    *   =wat gebeurt 'r be-           what happens wi-
59        bij u me↑e:=                  with it_PERS in your place
60    →   =°wat doet u daar↑mee         what do you do with that_DEM [there-with]
```

Though, strictly spoken, the questions themselves do not have to mark a thematic redirection, the questioner still observably prefers to select a deictic expression. The redirection analysis thus might account only for one class of deviations from the recency principle. Not all 'deviating' uses of a demonstrative pronoun in interrogative clauses can be analysed as the result of an orientation to mark a shift in thematic status.

Moreover, not all deviating cases can be analysed as taking part in thematic redirections. In fragment (6), for example, the question in line 57 does not accomplish a topic shift or another type of thematic redirection of the talk. The questioner nevertheless refers to an entity with a demonstrative pronominal expression (the demonstrative adverb 'daarvoor': literally 'there-for'), although this entity has already been represented through a personal pronoun (it, ln.53). The fragment is partially repeated below for convenience of the reader:

(6)    (LC/j) [continuation of (2); detail]

```
41   A:   wat doet(t)ie daঞ ar          what does he do there
42        0,4                            0.4
43   B:   >chef:. algemene:-             chief general-
44        nou algemene dienst=          well general services
          (...)                          (...)
```

```
52   B:   of groepsleiding              or groupmanager
53      → noemen ze 't ook wel.         they call itᴾᴿˢ sometimes as well.
```

```
54        (.)                            (.)
55   A:   j↑a                            yes,
56        0,5                            0.5
```

```
57   A: → heeft ie daarvoor geleeↈ :rd   did he get a training for thatᴰᴱᴹ [there-for]
```

The questions in this fragment constitute elements in a series of question/answer pairs about the work of the father of the interviewee. In each next question the interviewer focuses upon a further detail of the information proffered in the preceding answer. Each subsequent question is chained to the preceding question/answer pair through tying devices such as the use of pronouns (cf. Sacks 1992 Vol.I: 150-62). Though the general pattern of anaphora selection in fragment (6) is still in accordance with the recency principle, the 'deviation' from it can hardly be seen as a redirection of the ongoing line of the talk. The question in line 57 simply maintains the method of nested thematic progression which was already instituted in the course of the preceding question/answer pairs. Yet a demonstrative pronominal expression is used to code an already thematically established and contextually available entity.

The coding of discourse entities may thus be governed by another principle. One interesting possibility is the relation between the selection of a specific type of pronominal expression and the sequential status of the utterance as a whole. The 'deviation' in fragment (6) concerns the formulation of the topic entity in a question-delivery unit, – as do all other instances of deviation from the recency principle we have seen until now. The selection of the demonstrative might then be connected to the kind of activity the speaker accomplishes in this utterance type: the asking of a question.

A quantitative search through the corpus with the research interview materials indeed confirms that topic entities in interrogative wh-clauses are coded frequently through a demonstrative pronoun or adverb (Table 1):

Table 1:    Distribution of different types of pronominal formulations of the topic entity in wh-interrogatives (in total 202 interrogative wh-clauses were examined)[10]

| dat | [that] | 34 | die | ['that one'] | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| daar | [there][11] | 13 | d'r | [unstressed there] | 5 |
| toen | [then, temporal] | 5 | dan | [then, consequential] | 9 |
| 't | [unstressed het: it] | 8 | 'r | [unstr. er: phoric there] | 6 |

In the majority of cases in which the topic entity of interrogative wh-clauses could be formulated pronominally, it was coded through a deictic expression. However, apart from evidence from conversational repair as in fragment (10), I have not encountered any other type of independent evidence.[12] Yet some indirect evidence could be found showing that questioners prefer to code the topic entity of a wh-question through the use of a deictic device.

Amongst the deviant cases, a more or less homogeneous class can be discerned. Speakers tend to formulate the topic entity of reported questions differently than given entities with a comparable thematic status in question-delivery units, – namely through the use of a personal pronoun.

Interrogative sentences may be used to accomplish activities other than questioning, most notably, to quote questions. Interrogatives may also be used to describe problems, or to assert a statement by asking a question to which the answer is supposed to be known. A substantial number of the deviant cases concerned quoted questions or interrogatives describing problems. When an interrogative utterance was used to cite questions which were asked in the reported speech event, or when interrogative utterances described problems, speakers usually selected a personal pronoun to code the topic entity of that utterance.

In fragment (11), for example, a speaker quotes a question he has been asking himself in the situation he is telling about. In this environment an unstressed variant of the personal pronoun it ('t) is used to formulate the topic entity of the interrogative clause (ln.585):

(11)  (LC/j) [*quoted question*]

```
580  B:   hij zeg waarom ga je niet      he says why don't you go
581       naar 't cee niↄvo             to the C-level? (higher education level)
582       0,8                           0.8
583  B:   toen zeg ik,                  then I say,
584       ↓nou dat lijkt (we)↑wat,=     well, thatₐₑₘ sounds interesting,
585   →   =ik zeg m[aar wat houdt 't ↑in:   I say b[ut what does itₚₑₘ imply?
586  A:           [>ojah!                     [yes!
587       0,3                           0.3
588  B:   nou dat houdt in              well that implies
589       daje 'n staₚpie hoger ga:↑ot,  that you step into a higher level,
```

The difference between the coding of topic entities in quoted questions and 'real' questions becomes even clearer when parallel sentence formats are compared. Look at the devices used to code the topic entities in the interrogatives in fragments (12) and (13):

(12)  (NEX/f/3000) [*quoted question*]

```
122  B:   natuurlijk weer 'tzelfde verhaal   of course the same story again
123       wat ik tegen jou verteld heb ook=  which I also told you
124       =ohij ook vrageh natuurlijk        he was asking questions as well, of course
125   →   van hoe is 't gegaan,              about how did itₚₑₘ go,
126       je jeugd oen alles                 your youth and everything
127       oen afij[n daar praat ik nou over  and we[ll that's what I'm talking about now
128  A:          [m:↓m                             [m:↓m
```

(13)  (LC/j) [*comparable format*]

```
225  A:   hoe eh- ()                         how uh
226       >wilde je ze↑lf naar deze schoↄol  did you want to go yourself to this school
225       0,4                                0.7
226  A: → (·mt) hoe's dat gega↓an=           how did thatₐₑₘ go.
227       =van die mav↓o:                    from that MAVO ((school-type)).
```

The interrogatives in (12) and (13) not only display a similar utterance format: the question in line 226 of (13) also has nearly identical wordings as the interrogative clause in line 125 of (12). In both cases the selection of the demonstrative pronoun would have been grammatically possible. However, in the case of the reported question in fragment (12) the personal pronoun is selected to formulate the topic entity of the interrogative clause, whereas in the question in (13) the demonstrative is used.

A partially related type of use of interrogative forms may be observed when interrogatives are used to describe problems or issues to be explored discursively. Compare the interrogatives in fragment (14), – lines 541, 544 and 546:

(14)  (NEX/j) [*problem describing uses of interrogatives*]

```
534        >wat is nou travestie eigelijk,   well, what is transvestism actually,
535        1,1                               1.1
536  B:    is dat nou tↄch iets              is it [thatₐₑₘ] indeed something
537        wat gewoon aanVAArd moet wordeh,  which simply has to be accepted,
538        0,2                               0.2
539  B:    als tↄch wel norma↓al: ↑maar-     something quite normal indeed, but-
540        1,0                               1.0
541  B: →  >maar hoe zit 't dan verder?      >but how about itₚₑₘ further?
542        0,2                               0.2
543  B:    en e:h ↑jah ohoe is (dat-)        and e:h yes ohow is (thatₐₑₘ-)
544     →  >hoe ontsTAat ↑'t                 how does itₚₑₘ develop,
545        (.)
546  B: →  waar komt ('t) vanDA↑an:          where does (itₚₑₘ) come from,
547        (.)                               (.)
548  A:    (om:)                             (om:)
```

In each of the latter three problem-describing interrogatives in (14) the speaker selects the personal pronoun *it* (*'t*) to code the topic entity. Again the use of a demonstrative pronoun could have been possible from a purely grammatical point of view.

The second interrogative in this series is particularly revealing. In line 544 the interviewee cuts off the delivery of the turn-constructional unit midway. The repair in line 544 shows that the substitution of the demonstrative by a personal pronoun is at least one of the effects of the correction. The speaker observably prefers the use of a personal pronoun to code the topic entity.

Speakers appear to code the topic entity of a reported question more easily through an anaphoric expression, whereas the topic entity of a *wh*-question is rather formulated deictically. The difference in sequential status of these two types of utterances might provide some cues with respect to the rationality behind this distribution.

Reported questions and interrogatives used to describe problems do not establish the expectation of an answer. The continuation of the interactions in the fragments (11), (12) and (14) show that the interrogatives are not treated as questions to be answered. In line 588 of (11) the speaker of the quoted question himself, continues with a report of the answer which was given to that question (ln.588-89). In (12) and (14) the interrogatives are responded to by an *acknowledgment token* (Jefferson 1984): *m:m* in line 128 of (12) and *m:* in line 548 of (14). Instead of reacting to the previous utterance as a question, the recipients treat the prior turn as something which has only to be *acknowledged*. In all cases, the use of the interrogative is observably not analysed as the first part of the adjacency pair type 'question/answer', – that is, the recipient does not treat the utterance of the interrogative as making an answer *conditionally relevant* (*cf.* Schegloff 1968).

There appears to be some connection between the sequential function of the utterance as a whole, and the type of device used to formulate the topic entity of an interrogative clause. In section 3 it has been shown that the functional differences between phoric and deictic expressions fit nicely with the phenomena reported with respect to the recency principle. However, though the deictic coding of the topic entity of a question may coincide with its establishment into the discourse, this condition does not have to be met, – as was also shown in section 3.

The individuation which demonstratives accomplish (cf. Hanks 1992: 66) might not only be suited to establish a new discourse entity as a D-topic. It just might be used to achieve other types of locally relevant tasks as well. By coding the topic entity of a *wh-question* deictically, a questioner seems to foreground the *anchoring point* of the search for information undertaken in the ongoing question/answer sequence. The anchoring point indexes the search domain of the question. Deictically coded, it instrues the recipient to move the discourse entity into focus that is proposed as the starting point of the information search initiated by the utterance as a whole. As a part of a question, it directs the recipient's attention to the knowledge cluster – possibly gathered incrementally in the discourse context – around the entity it refers to. The discourse entity is triggered as the reference point (cf. Langacker 1993 and Cornish 1994) which locates the knowledge domain in which the answer information presumably may be found.

On the other hand, the use of a personal pronoun primarily codes an entity's thematic availability and continuity,[13] – as appeared to be appropriate in the reported questions examined above. In these cases, there was no particular sequential rationality to direct the recipient's attention particularly to the topic entity of the utterance in question. No answers are expected, so there is no interactional need to guide the recipient's attention to a particular knowledge domain.

The deictic coding of the topic entity in question-delivery units cannot only be accounted for by an orientation to the recency principle. By selecting a deictic expression a questioner appears to invest the topic entity with local sequential relevancy partly independently from the recency dimension. The selection of a deictic device might be the result of the interaction of an orientation to two principles of which the effects may overlap: (i) the *recency principle*; and (ii) a principle which assesses the *local sequential relevance* of the entity in question.

The prominence of a discourse entity appears to be determined not only at the thematic level of discourse structure but is also dependent on the communicative and/or sequential function of the whole utterance. Speakers may

mark the topic entity of first pair-parts such as questions as a sequentially relevant entity. Accordingly, on those occasions in which a speaker can choose between a personal and a demonstrative pronoun in questions, this entity is coded preferably through a deictic expression, rather than through a phoric device. Providing an entity with focal status marks it as a kind of locally relevant anchoring point of the interactional process initiated by the utterance as a whole.

The deictic coding of topic entities in questions appears to be also governed through a pragmatic selection restriction with respect to the sequential function of the whole utterance. When the interrogative is meant to be heard as a question, its anchoring point is marked through the use of a demonstrative form. When the interrogative is used to achieve other types of interactional tasks, its topic entity is presented as a thematically established entity through the use of a personal pronoun. In the latter case, the speaker orients to the recency principle, whereas in the former, the principle of local sequential relevance prevails.

## 6.    Discussion

The analysis shows that patterns of anaphora selection also need to be accounted for at the level of sequential organization. A particular type of device might be used not only to code referential accessibility or to mark thematic structure. It might also function as a method of marking the local relevance of an entity with respect to the sequential status of the utterance in which it occurs. Pragmatic selection restrictions appear to be a relevant factor in the selection of a particular type of coding device. Speakers preferably select a deictic expression to mark the topic entity of *wh*-questions as the locally relevant anchoring point of the question/answer process (the *relevance principle*). On the other hand, a third-person personal pronoun is used to code entities as thematically continuous (the *recency principle*).

The shape of question turns thus displays a kind of recipient design which shows that questioners observably orient to the methods the adressee might use to locate the information necessary for the answer:

> "(...) one can begin to see that participants' conceptions of the working of the mind are somehow going to figure significantly in the organization of talk." (Goffman 1983: 10).

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NOTES

1.   I want to thank Claire van der Donk for looking at my English.

2.   Most of the data come from a collection of 202 interrogative *wh*-clauses occurring in a corpus of transcriptions of open-ended interviews which were held on behalf of qualitative sociological research. Appendix I gives a survey of the conventions used to transcribe the audio recordings of the spoken materials. The left side of the transcription renders the original text; the right side presents a provisonal translation. I have tried to maintain those features of the original text which are of particular interest for the present analysis. Underlinings in the Dutch text mark notably stressed syllables, whereas boldface points to expressions the analysis will focus upon.

3.   In Dutch, speakers have both personal pronouns and demonstrative pronouns available to refer to third persons. For example, where an English speaker would use the stressed personal pronoun (*hé*, *shé*, or *théy*), a Dutch speaker might select a substantive demonstrative pronoun ('that one' or 'those ones'). The difference is partly comparable to that between English *it* and *that*. See (i) for an excerpt of the relevant part of the Dutch pronominal system:

(i)   *personal pronouns*
      hij* / zij / het (*sing.*)     zij (*plur.*)     ? er**
      *he    she   it*              *they*            (phoric *'there'*)

      *unmarked independent demonstrative pronouns/adverbs*
      die          / dat (*sing.*)     die (*plur.*)     daar (*unstressed*: d'r)
      *'that one'*  */ that*           *'those ones'*    *there*
      (*masc+fem. / neutr.*)

      * The unstressed, clitic variant of *hij* ([hɛi], *'he'*) is *ie* [i].
      ** *er* ([ɛR]; unstressed: *'r* [ǝR]): it might also be difficult for non-Dutch speakers to get a grasp of the sneaky little word *er*. There is no English equivalent for this form. Sometimes its use is comparable with the personal pronoun *it*, – especially when it is combined with a preposition. In other cases it is similar to unstressed uses of *there* (as in presentative constructions; in the formulaic openings of fairy tales, *e.g.*, Dutch storytellers don't say *Once upon a time THERE was ...*, but *ER was eens ['once'] ...* ). And in yet another set of cases one can only say that English speakers do not use a comparable form. In a sense, English would have a *zero* element where Dutch speakers cue the indexical framework of the event or state described in the utterance in which *er* is used.

4.   Translated into the notions used in scale (1), the demonstrative thus counts as a 'strong' pronoun and the – unstressed and/or clitic – personal pronoun falls within the class of the 'weak' pronouns.

5.   Bolkestein 1992 observes a similar strategy for Latin, as does Kleiber 1986 for French. See also Maes 1991; he describes a comparable function of the use of demonstrative nominal anaphors.

6.   Maynard (1980) characterizes the difference between *topic change* and *topic shift* as follows: topic changes "are unrelated to talk in prior turns in that they utilize new referents, and thus implicate and occasion a series of utterances constituting a different line of talk" (1980: 264); topic shifts "involve a move from one aspect of a topic to another to occasion different sets of mentionables" (ibid.: 271).

7.   Fragment (9) is from another set of data than the interview materials. It stems from a corpus of conversations between pupils and was transcribed by Henrike Padmos.

8.   In the original version it was not acoustically decidable whether the speaker used the clitical variant of the personal pronoun *ie* ('he'), or the demonstrative *die* (with its initial [d] reduced to voiceless [t] through backward assimilation).

9.   The thematic redirection account is partly compatible with earlier observations in the literature. Linde (1979), for example, has observed that American speakers prefer *it* to formulate entities within the current focus of attention. Entities spoken about before but already dethematizised (outside the current thematic node) are referred to with *that*. The use of the demonstrative pronoun not only moves the *point of reference*, it also marks a change of context. Bolkestein (1992) describes partly comparable patterns with respect to written Latin. The choice between the demonstratives *ille* and *hic* and the anaphor *is* appears to be partially guided by text structuring tasks such as the shift from a headline to an aside.

10.  In those cases in which the topic entity was not coded pronominally, it was most frequently formulated through an unreduced definite noun phrase. Usually these were repeated NP's (nominal anaphors), frequently with a demonstrative determiner.

11.  *Daar* ['there']: inclusively demonstrative pronominal adverbs such as *daarvan* ('there-of'), *daarmee* ('there-with'), *daaraan* ('there-to'). *D'r* [unstressed / unfocused *there*]: I hesitate about the status of this expression with respect to the *deictic / phoric* distinction. It might be somewhere in between *daar* (deictic *there*) and *er* (phoric *there*). Because of that, I have taken the use of this form separately. *Toen* (temporal *then*] and *dan* [consequential *then*]: the use of these adverbs also has (text-)deictical properties.

12.  In those cases in which questions are used to achieve some kind of thematic redirection (see section 4), the operation of a more general principle would at least coincide with the effects of the device which has been proposed in section 4 (the topic entity of an utterance that redirects the ongoing thematic line is coded preferrably through a demonstrative expression). If indeed a more general orientation is operative, the orientation to the thematic redirection principle needs to be validated independently from the utterance type it has been shown for now.

13.  Personal pronouns usually do not provide a discourse entity with focal status in Dutch. If so, the personal pronoun gets the last sentence accent. In that case, the pronoun absorbs focus. It constitutes the focus on its own, independent of other information in the sentence. However, this is a marked type of focus assignment. Focused personal pronouns trigger a contrastive interpretation (*cf.* Verhagen 1986: 97-104). Demonstrative pronouns, on the other hand, may provide an entity with some kind of focal status without necessarily asking for a contrastive interpretation.

## Appendix: *Some transcription conventions\**

### (i) sequential relations

| | |
|---|---|
| sp[eaker-1 | the left-hand brackets mark the onset of |
|   [spr-2 ... | simultaneous talk by another participant. |
| (1.5) | numbers on separate lines or between parentheses indicate the time in seconds that intervals of no speech last. |
| (.) | a dot placed in parenthesis indicates an interval of no speech less than two tenths of a second. |
| utterance-1= | equal signs indicate that a next utterance is |
| =utterance-2 | latched to the former without any noticeable interval. |

### (iia) intonation

Interpunctuation signs are not to be regarded as means of grammatical segmentation, nor as markers of the communicative function of the utterance in question. They just characterize global intonation movements.

| | |
|---|---|
| . | a full stop indicates a fall in intonation. |
| , | a comma indicates a slightly rising, 'continuing' intonation. |
| ? | the question mark indicates a stronger rising intonation. |
| ↑↓ | up- and downward arrows indicate marked rising and falling shifts in intonation. |

### (iib) sound production

| | |
|---|---|
| accent | underlined parts of utterances are discernably emphasized. |
| lo:ng: | colons mark relative duration of prolonged sounds. |
| louder | capitals mark talk that is relatively louder than the surrounding talk. |
| °softer | the degree sign indicates that the subsequent (part of the) utterance is spoken more quietly than the surrounding talk. |
| cut off- | the hyphen functions as a cut-off marker. |
| ·hh | audible inbreath, each h indicates a length of roughly two tenths of a second. |
| hhHh | discernable aspiration. Each h indicates a length of two tenths of a second. A capital H marks relatively louder aspiration parts. |

### (iic) speech delivery pace

| | |
|---|---|
| >faster | a sharp right-hand angle indicates the relative speeding up of the pace in which the subsequent utterance part is delivered. |
| <slower | relatively slowing down. |

### (iii) transcription problems

| | |
|---|---|
| ( ) | the transcriber is not able to interpret a part of the talk. The length of space is an indication of the length of uninterpretable talk (either a syllable for every 3 spaces, or relative to the length of the talk of another speaker in the case of simultaneous talk). |
| (guess) | the transcriber is in doubt of the correctness of what he or she thinks to hear. |
| ((sniffs)) | descriptions of noticeable nonverbal activities are given within double parenthesis and in italics. |

\* The transcript notation is developed by Gail Jefferson.

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# COHERENCE & ANAPHORA

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# & ANAPHORA

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