DEMONSTRATIVE REFERENCES OF THIS AND THAT IN ENGLISH SPEECHES BY CHINESE COLLEGE STUDENTS

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A B S T R A C T

Demonstrative reference is a common means of cohesion in discourse. Based on Cohesion Theory by Halliday and Hasan, the paper is aimed at exploring the use of this and that as a means of deixis and reference in college English speeches from the perspective of discourse cohesion to achieve more effective analysis and appreciation of English speeches.

Keywords: English Speech, Chinese College Student, Deixis, Reference, Cohesion, Analysis

INTRODUCTION

In the concept of discourse, cohesion is the indispensable means of generating ideas, and reference is an important way to embody this means. Halliday and Hassan, representatives of the functional linguistic school, subdivided anaphora into personal reference, deictic reference and comparative reference (1976: 4). Anaphora is the connection point between one linguistic element and another. Both the explicit reference point in English and the implicit reference point in Chinese can be found in the text context respectively. In the process of interpreting and translating a text, the reference relationship between language components is an important basis for the interpreter to decode text information.

According to Halliday & Hasan (1976), the interpretation of a word cannot be obtained from the word itself, whereas the answer must be found from the object meant by the word, which leads to anaphora. Anaphora provides people with the information needed to understand the relevant language components. Deictic reference is an important means of discourse cohesion.

Grammarians have done a lot of research on English demonstrative pronouns this and that in the past, but most of them are confined to the traditional syntactic field. With the development and change of language, traditional syntactic research has been unable to answer some linguistic phenomena of *this* and *that* demonstrative references. With the development of modern linguistics, the study of this and that has turned to the discourse field involving pragmatics, semantics and cognition. Hou Guojin (2002) reviewed the pragmatics of *this*; Deng Xiaoling (2004) explored the pragmatic similarities and differences between Chinese and English deictic words "zhe" and "this"; Yang Huiwen (2012) conducted a textual translation equivalence study on the Chinese translation of *this* and *that*; David Peeters, Aslı Özyürek (2016) reconsidered spatial demonstratives *this* and *that* from a social and multimodal approach.

In sum, *this* and *that* as demonstrative references have been covered from many perspectives, with few studies on the use of *this* and *that* in speech discourses. College Students' English speeches can fully demonstrate the speech skills and English proficiency of contemporary Chinese college students. This paper intends to explore the deictic reference of *this* and *that* as deictic and referential devices in college English speeches by Chinese college students.

RESEARCH DESIGN
Research questions
This study aims to analyze the frequency of *this* and *that* as determiners and pronouns, and *that* as conjunctions in English speeches by Chinese college students, together with their contextual analysis in College English speeches. As demonstrative pronouns, *this* and *that* can be used as a subject, an object, a predicative, etc., to refer back or avoid repetition; as determiners, they can be followed by various common nouns, that is, individual nouns, collective nouns, material nouns and abstract nouns. What are their specific usages in college English speeches when used as demonstrative pronouns and determiners? How is the correlation manifested in students' speeches accordingly?

Research corpus
The corpus of this paper is a total of 40 college English speeches by the winners of Chinese National English speech contests. Students choose different topics to give speeches. The content involves politics, economy, society, campus, personal life and so on. The brief information of 40 college English speeches is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. General description of 40 College English Speeches.

Length		Text Complexity		Lexical Density		Reference Density		
Number of segments	Words in segments	Av. Word Length	Av. Segment Length	Lexemes per segment	Lexemes % of text	1p Reference	2p Reference	3p Reference
26604	26470	4.54	0.99	0.47	47.58%	5.52%	0.72%	3.17%

Source: This table was made by the author.

As can be seen from Table 1, the average length of each speech is less than 200 words, whereas each speech has to be powerful and persuasive in diction. The second person pronouns of the 40 speakers were used the least and the first person pronouns were used the most. This is because the second person often produces a hint that separates the speaker from the listener. The first person is convenient for the expression of subjective psychology, which is highly infectious and easy to express emotions.

Research method
In this paper, qualitative and quantitative analysis methods are used. Qualitative research in this paper refers to cohesive devices, with each speech carefully being analyzed to identify and confirm the language environment in which this and that are used as determiners and pronouns respectively in 40 speeches. In this paper, the quantitative research is accurate with Corpus tool and SPSS17.0 software being used to count the frequency of *this* and *that*, and to analyze the correlation of the same usage of *this* and *that*, for the accuracy and objectivity of data analysis.

According to the classification of referential means, the software annotation mainly refines the usage of *this* and *that* as qualifier and pronoun, and *that* as conjunction respectively. After the framework being set in the software, each speech is coded and the targets are counted.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
As for pronouns, *this* and *that* can function as a subject, an object and a predicative in a sentence; *that* can also appear at the beginning of attributive clauses as relative pronouns; as determiners, they can be followed by single nouns, collective nouns, material nouns and abstract nouns; as conjunctions, *that* can be located at the beginning of subject clauses, predicative clauses, object clauses and appositive clauses. Table 2 shows the frequency of *this* and *that* in 40 College English speeches.

Table 2. *This* and *That* as determiners and pronouns, *That* as conjunctions.

Total 411	Word		Type	Feature	Percent	N
	This (∑162, 39.4%)		Pronoun (∑42, 25.9%)	Subject	66.7%	28
				Object	31%	13
				Predicative	2.4%	1
			Determiner (∑120, 74.1%)	+individual noun	45.8%	55
				+collective noun	24.2%	29
				+material noun	5%	6
				+abstract noun	25%	30
	That (∑249, 60.6%)		Pronoun (∑87, 34.9%)	Subject	18.4%	16
				Object	11.5%	10
				Predicative	2.3%	2
				Relative pronoun	67.8%	59
			Determiner (∑24, 9.6%)	+individual noun	45.8%	11
				+collective noun	0.0%	0
				+material noun	4.2%	1
				+abstract noun	50.0%	12
			Conjunction (∑138, 55.4%)	+subjective clause	9.4%	13
				+objective clause	65.9%	91
				+predicative clause	8.0%	11
				+appositive clause	16.7%	23

Source: This table was made by the author.

As can be seen from Table 2, *this* is mainly used as a subject in the speech, whereas *that* is mainly used as a relative pronoun to lead a clause; *this* and *that* are mainly followed by individual nouns when they are used as determiners; *that* as conjunctions, leading objective clauses the most, while the predicative clauses and subject clause the least. As for pronouns, *that* is used more frequently than *this*; while as determiners, *that* is used less frequently. When used in a text, *this* and *that* together with the referent can play an important role in the text structure cohesion, the anaphora being essential in the context of the discourse.

The deictic usage of *this* and *that* means that their referents and their meanings in sentences can be confirmed only under the explicit contexts. Without the specific context, their referential contents or information will be ambiguous. Table 3 presents the language environment of *this* and *that* in 40 English speeches by Chinese college students.

In Table 3, six pairs of related samples being presented in the T-test, with *this* as a subject, an object and *that* as a subject, an object respectively, because P-value is greater than 0.05, there is no significant correlation.

However, when *this* and *that* being followed by individual nouns, P-value is less than 0.01, indicating a significant correlation. Table 4 partial correlation analysis is used to analyze the correlation between *this* and *that* as determiners used after individual nouns, collective nouns, material nouns and abstract nouns respectively.

Table 4 shows the variables that may affect the linear correlation between two variables. When the total amount of *this* and *that* as determiners being controlled, whether there is any correlation between these nouns following *this* and *that*, it can be seen from the table that the correlation between *this* followed by individual nouns and collective nouns is stronger than the correlation between *this* followed by material nouns and abstract nouns. As for the use of nouns used after *that*, there is no correlation between collective nouns and individual nouns, material nouns and collective nouns, abstract nouns and collective nouns. Table 5 partial correlation analysis shows the correlation between *this* and *that* as pronouns and their use as subjects, objects and predicatives respectively.

Table 3. Paired sample T-test

Pairs	Pair name	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper		
Pair 1	This as a pronoun - That as a pronoun	-1.731	4.295	.842	-3.465	.004	-2.055	.050
Pair 2	This as a determiner- That as a determiner	3.692	7.817	1.533	.535	6.850	2.409	.024
Pair 3	This as a subject - That as a subject	.462	1.392	.273	-.101	1.024	1.690	.103
Pair 4	This as an object - That as an object	.115	.653	.128	-.148	.379	.901	.376
Pair 5	This followed by individual nouns - That followed by individual nouns	1.692	2.346	.460	.745	2.640	3.679	.001
Pair 6	This followed by abstract nouns - That followed by abstract nouns	.692	1.594	.313	.048	1.336	2.214	.036

Source: This table was made by the author.

Table 4. Correlation analysis (*this*, *that* as determiners).

Control Variables			Nouns following *This*			
			individual nouns	collective nouns	material nouns	abstract nouns
This as a determiner	individual nouns following *this*	Correlation	1.000	-.686	-.444	-.511
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.000	.026	.009
	collective nouns following *this*	Correlation	-.686	1.000	.670	-.251
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.225
	material nouns following *this*	Correlation	-.444	.670	1.000	-.360
		Significance (2-tailed)	.026	.000	.	.077
	abstract nouns following *this*	Correlation	-.511	-.251	-.360	1.000
		Significance (2-tailed)	.009	.225	.077	.
Control Variables			Nouns following *That*			
			individual nouns	collective nouns	material nouns	abstract nouns
That as a determiner	individual nouns following *that*	Correlation	1.000	.	.065	-.894
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.	.758	.000
	collective nouns following *that*	Correlation	.	1.000	.	.
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.	.	.
	material nouns following *that*	Correlation	.065	.	1.000	-.505
		Significance (2-tailed)	.758	.	.	.010
	abstract nouns following *that*	Correlation	-.894	.	-.505	1.000
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.	.010	.

Source: This table was made by the author.

Table 5. Correlation analysis (*this*, *that* as pronouns).

Control Variables			*This* as a pronoun		
			as a subject	as an object	as a predicative
This as a pronoun	as a subject	Correlation	1.000	-.926	-.238
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.000	.251
	as an object	Correlation	-.926	1.000	-.145
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.	.490
	as a predicative	Correlation	-.238	-.145	1.000
		Significance (2-tailed)	.251	.490	.

Control Variables			*That* as a pronoun			
			as a subject	as an object	as a predicative	as a relative pronoun
That as a pronoun	as a subject	Correlation	1.000	-.407	.264	-.838
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.044	.202	.000
	as an object	Correlation	-.407	1.000	-.117	-.145
		Significance (2-tailed)	.044	.	.578	.490
	as a predicative	Correlation	.264	-.117	1.000	-.333
		Significance (2-tailed)	.202	.578	.	.104
	as a relative pronoun	Correlation	-.838	-.145	-.333	1.000
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.490	.104	.

Source: This table was made by the author.

It can be seen from Table 5 that the correlation between *this* as a subject and as an object is the strongest, while the correlation between *this* as an object and as a predicative is the weakest; *that* as a subject and as a relative pronoun being the strongest, and *that* as an object and a predicative being the weakest.

Table 6 presents the correlation between *that* as a conjunction and its leading a subjective clause, an objective clause, a predicative clause and an appositive clause respectively.

Table 6： Correlation analysis (*that* as a conjunction)

Control Variables			Clauses after *that*			
			subjective clauses	objective clauses	predicative clauses	appositive clauses
That as a conjunction	subjective clauses following *that*	Correlation	1.000	-.361	-.152	-.141
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.076	.469	.500
	objective clauses following *that*	Correlation	-.361	1.000	-.211	-.693
		Significance (2-tailed)	.076	.	.312	.000
	predicative clauses following *that*	Correlation	-.152	-.211	1.000	-.307
		Significance (2-tailed)	.469	.312	.	.135
	appositive clauses following *that*	Correlation	-.141	-.693	-.307	1.000
		Significance (2-tailed)	.500	.000	.135	.

Source: This table was made by the author.

It can be seen from Table 6 that when *that* is used as a conjunction, the correlation between its leading an objective clause and an appositive clause is the greatest, while the correlation between its leading a subjective clause and an appositive clause is the weakest.

CONCLUSION
Being a powerful means of communication, speeches are demanding in language use. In speech contests, students express their opinions and display their speech skills. Speech contests are supposed not only to be novel in

content but unique in conception, thus grasping the audience from the beginning to the end, moving the audience, conquering the audience and leaving a deep impression on the audience.

The frequency analysis of *this* and *that* as deixis and pronouns, as well as the correlation in the language environment, will help Chinese college students better master the writing skills of speeches and improve their appreciation of public speaking so as to hopefully avoid vagueness and ambiguity in communication.

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