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Demonstrative Adjectives in Spoken Finnish: Informational Sufficiency and the Speaker-Addressee Dynamic

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1. Introduction

This paper explores the referential properties of a class of specific indefinites in colloquial Finnish, namely nouns modified by the adjectives *sellainen* ‘such’, *tällainen* ‘this kind of’ and *tuollainen* ‘that kind of.’ These adjectives are derived from the proximal, distal and neutral demonstratives in Finnish, and can be optionally used to modify nouns, as shown in ex.(1a, b). Because Finnish has no grammaticalized system of definite or indefinite articles, the default option is for nouns to be bare, like ‘rock’ in ex.(1b).¹ This brings up the question of when do speakers choose to modify a noun with a demonstrative adjective, instead of just using a bare noun?

- (1a) *se pöllö ajoi Peten [semmosen ison kiven] päälle...* *Sellinen + NP*
‘the/that owl drove Pete on top of [SEMMONEN big rock] ...’
[example from Frog Story corpus]
- (1b) *se pöllö ajoi Peten [ison kiven] päälle...* *Bare NP*
‘the/that owl drove Pete on top of [big rock] ...’
[modified from corpus example]

Using data from elicited narration and other naturally-occurring examples, I explore the contexts in which demonstrative adjectives are used. I show that seemingly conflicting uses of *sellainen/tällainen/tuollainen* share a fundamental commonality related to upcoming/future information. More specifically, I suggest that when introducing a new entity into the discourse, a speaker uses a demonstrative adjective to modify the noun when s/he is aware that further information

¹ *Se* is used for the third person pronoun ‘it’, but in some contexts it functions like English ‘that’ (Laury 1997). Laury notes that *se* is developing into a kind of definite article in spoken Finnish, as can be seen with ‘owl’ in ex.(1)).

about the entity (beyond the information provided by the NP) is necessary for the addressee to arrive at the intended/correct denotation of the NP or to locate the intended referent (see also Ionin 2006). Thus, this construction signals a need for more elaboration in the immediately subsequent discourse.

In addition to providing insights into the interplay between referring expressions and the speaker-addressee dynamic, this work relates to the notion of referential persistence (Givón 1983, Chiriacescu and von Heusinger 2009, 2010), as it suggests that a referent's immediate persistence – how likely it is to be mentioned in the immediately subsequent discourse – is inversely correlated with the informational sufficiency of the form used to introduce it into the discourse.

The structure of the paper is as follows. In the rest of this section, I review existing work on the English demonstrative *this* used in indefinite contexts, which provides a foundation that will help us to understand the Finnish data. In Section 2, I discuss existing work on Finnish demonstrative adjectives. Section 3 presents the corpus study that I conducted on the referential properties of the Finnish demonstrative adjectives. In Section 4, I discuss a potential contradiction that arises when we try to reconcile the findings of the corpus study with other observations regarding the use of the demonstrative adjectives, and show that this contradiction can be resolved by using the notion of ‘informational insufficiency.’ Conclusions are given in Section 5.

1.1 Background: Indefinite ‘this’ in English

In English, demonstrative *this* normally functions as a proximal demonstrative. However, in colloquial usage it can also be used to modify indefinites, as in ex.(2) with existential-*there* constructions (see Maclaran 1982, Prince 1981).

- (2a) There is **this** man who lives upstairs from me who is driving me mad because he jumps rope at 2 a.m. every night. (Maclaran 1982: 85)
- (2b) . . .A few years ago, there was **this** hippie, long-haired, slovenly. He confronted me. . .” (Terkel, 1974:756, cited by Prince 1981:233)

The observation that *this* can function as an indefinite article brings up the question of what guides the choice of indefinite *a* vs. *this*. In one of the first papers on this topic, Maclaran (1982:90) suggests that use of *this* “draws attention to the fact that the speaker has a particular referent in mind, about which further information may be given.” As can be seen in ex(2a-b), in both cases the speaker does indeed go on to provide further information about the referent.

In more recent work, Ionin (2006) proposes that use of indefinite *this* is guided by the intuitive notion of ‘noteworthiness.’ More specifically, she argues that “the use of a *this*-indefinite requires the statement of something noteworthy about the individual denoted by the indefinite” (Ionin 2006:181). This is illustrated by

the examples in (3). Use of *this* to modify the new referent *pen* is felicitous in (3b) but not in (3a), because in (3b) the pen turns out to be noteworthy because it explodes and spills ink. A similar point is made by the examples in (4), where indefinite *this* can be used felicitously when the stamp turns out to be noteworthy due to its value.

- (3a) Becky wrote some thank-you notes using {**a** / # **this**} purple pen; then she mailed the notes to her friends.
- (3b) Becky wrote some thank-you notes using {**a** / **this**} purple pen, which suddenly exploded, spilling purple ink all over Becky's clothes and furniture! (examples from Ionin 2006: 181)
- (4a) He put on {**a** / #**this**} 31 cent stamp on the envelope, so he must want it to go airmail.
- (4b) He put on {**a** / **this**} 31 cent stamp on the envelope, and only realized later that it was worth a fortune because it was unperforated. (examples from Maclaran 1982:88)

Ionin (2006) also provides a detailed semantic analysis of indefinite *this*, and related issues have been explored in the crosslinguistic domain by Chiriacescu & von Heusinger (2009), (2010) for Romanian and Deichsel (2011) for German. With this background in mind, let us now turn to Finnish. In the next sections, I consider the referential properties of demonstrative modifiers in Finnish. I return to the concept of 'noteworthiness' in Section 4, when analyzing the corpus data that I obtained by means of an elicitation study.

2. Demonstrative Adjectives in Finnish

Finnish is a case-marked, flexible word order language. The canonical word order is subject-verb-object (SVO), but all six possible word orders are grammatical in the appropriate contexts (e.g., Vilkuna 1995). Finnish has no grammaticalized definite or indefinite articles; bare nouns can be used for both specific and non-specific, new and previously mentioned referents. However, the adjectives *sellainen* 'such', *tällainen* 'this kind of' and *tuollainen* 'that kind of' can be optionally used in prenominal position.

These adjectives are derived from the demonstratives *se*¹ 'it, that', *tämä* 'this', *tuo* 'that' by addition of the suffix *-lainen* (Table 1; only nominative case shown). Traditionally, *tämä* 'this' is regarded as proximal, *tuo* 'that' as distal, and *se* 'it, that' as neutral or proximal from the perspective of the addressee (Larjavaara 1990, Juvonen 2000). According to Laury (1997)'s work on the Finnish demonstratives, *tämä* 'this' is used to refer to referents in the speaker's own sphere, *se* 'it, that' for referents in the addressee's sphere, and *tuo* 'that' for referents outside the speaker's sphere (Laury 1997:89). The *-lainen* suffix adds the meaning 'like NP, similar to NP, resembling NP' (Ikola 1986:91). The suffix has its origins in

the noun *laji* ‘kind, sort, type’ and the adjectival suffix *-inen* (Vesikansa 1977:76).

It is worth noting that Finnish also has the versions *semmoinen*, *tämmöinen* and *tuommainen*. According to Vesikansa (1977) and Ikola (1986), these versions are derived from *se*, *tämä* and *tuo* by means of the suffix *-moinen* (also Juvonen 2000). This suffix comes from word *moinen*, meaning ‘such.’ Vesikansa and Ikola note that words derived with *-moinen* are often synonymous with words derived with *-lainen*. Dasinger (1995) takes a slightly different view and treats forms like *semmoinen* as dialectal variants of forms like *sellainen*. In this paper, I treat *sellainen*, *tällainen* and *tuollainen* and *semmoinen*, *tämmöinen* and *tuommainen* respectively, as synonyms of each other.²

The derived forms in Table (1) can occur as independent pronouns (ex.5b) or as prenominal modifiers (ex.5a). When used prenominally, they agree in case with the head noun. In this paper, I focus on the prenominal use.³

Table 1: Finnish demonstratives and derived demonstrative adjectives

Root	Suffix	Resulting word
<i>se</i> ‘it, that’	-lainen	<i>sellainen</i> ‘such’
<i>tämä</i> ‘this’	-lainen	<i>tällainen</i> ‘this kind of’
<i>tuo</i> ‘that’	-lainen	<i>tuollainen</i> ‘that kind of’

- (5a) En ole syönyt [**sellaista** ruokaa].
 ‘I have not eaten [**SELLAINEN** food]’ ≈ ‘I have not eaten that kind of food/such food’ (from Karlsson 1999:139)
- (5b) Mikään navigaationkurssi ei korvaa vastuunsa tuntevaa päällikköä. [**Sellainen**] on veneessä aina oltava.
 ‘No navigation course can replace a responsible captain. [**SELLAINEN**] must always be on a boat.’ (Hakulinen & Karlsson 1988:321, transl. EK)

2.1 Referential Properties of Demonstrative Adjectives

Let us now review prior work that investigated the contexts in which *sellainen*, *tällainen* and *tuollainen* are used as prenominal modifiers in spoken Finnish (Our primary focus in this paper is on Colloquial (spoken) Finnish. Standard Finnish is a more formal register that is primarily used in writing and formal/official statements. Daily communication and everyday interactions take place in Colloquial Finnish. Similar to English, where indefinite *this* is mostly a colloquial phenomenon, the uses we are investigating in Finnish also seem to be more prevalent in the

² In addition to these forms, the examples from naturally-occurring narratives also contain phonetically reduced forms, e.g. *tommonen* for *tuommainen*, *semmonen* for *semmoinen*.

³ Because the Finnish demonstrative articles cannot be translated straightforwardly into English, in the translations, I will use the Finnish form (in small caps, in nominative case).

spoken language than in the written/Standard language.).

Out of the three demonstrative adjectives, *sellainen* ‘such’ has received the most attention in prior work, including detailed analyses of naturally-occurring examples. According to Vilkuna (1992), in Colloquial Finnish *sellainen* + NP can be used when introducing entities or concepts whose characteristics (or the characteristics of the class they belong to) are unknown or unfamiliar to the listener. As Dasinger (1995) notes, speakers’ use of *sellainen* depends on “whether the listener is expected to know the characteristics of items in a certain class” (Dasinger 1995:115). I will refer to this as the ‘unfamiliar entity’ use: The speaker uses *sellainen* when introducing entities whose properties s/he suspects the addressee does not know or is unfamiliar with.

The ‘unfamiliar entity’ use is exemplified in the naturally-occurring examples below. In ex.(6a), use of the modifier *semmonen* signals that the clerk assumes that the customer is not familiar with the characteristics of (the class of things that are) Tiroli bread. Moreover, Vilkuna notes that use of *semmonen* in the clerk’s answer indicates that s/he realizes the customer would also like to know other information about the bread (such as the characteristics of the class it belongs to), in addition to its name – in other words, the clerk knows that his answer, which simply tells the hearer what class of things the bread belongs to, is not sufficient. In ex. (6b), use of *semmonen* in front of the noun phrase indicates that the speaker assumes that the listener is not familiar with the concept ‘school garden thing.’

(6a) An exchange in a bakery (from Vilkuna 1992):

Customer: ‘What is that?’
 Bakery employee: Se on [**semmonen** Tirolin leipä]
 ‘It’s [**SEMMONEN** Tiroli bread]’

(6b) (Helasvuo 1988:92-93, cited by Vilkuna 1992)

Me osallistuttiin [**semmoseen** koulupuutarhahommaan], sielä, m, ... Käpylän liepeillä kuin on se, se [**semmonen** siirtolapuutarha-alue]...
 ‘We participated in [**SEMMONEN** school-garden-thing], there, um...near Käpylä there is that, that [**SEMMONEN** allotment garden area]....’

Before moving on to the other forms, it is worth noting that not all uses of *sellainen* in prenominal position involve this type of ‘unfamiliar entity’ situation. For example, *sellainen* can also be used in situations where the listener is familiar with the characteristics or properties of a particular entity, and the speaker wants to make reference to those properties. This is illustrated in (5a) as well as (6c), where *sellainen* could be translated into English as ‘that kind of (car).’

(6c) (context: talking about special cars that have built-in speed restrictors)

[**Sellaisella** autolla] ei yksinkertaisesti pysty ajamaan ylinopeutta.
 ‘With [**SELLAINEN** car] it is simply not possible to exceed the speed limit.’

(www.aikakauslehdet.fi/al_koulussa/artikkelipankki/luonne_nakyy.htm)

The other two forms, *tällainen* ‘this kind of’ and *tuollainen* ‘that kind of’ have not been discussed much in prior work, and have not been investigated in depth in naturally-occurring speech. On the basis of constructed examples, Dasinger observes that they signal “class membership without requiring exact equivalence between the items located in the class” (Dasinger 1995:188, see also Hakulinen et al. 2004). This is illustrated in (7a,b,c). Thus, if we imagine a person looking at a car and uttering ex.(7a), then what she means is that driving a car similar to the one she is looking at – or the one she is looking at – is not possible. Thus, she is making a statement about cars belonging to a certain class. Note that in these examples, similar to (6c), *tällainen/tuollainen* have an antecedent either in the linguistic or in the visual context (a car, or a piece of clothing that has a certain color).

- (7a) [Tällaisella autolla] ei voi ajaa.
‘One cannot drive in [**this kind of car**].’ (Karlsson 1999:139)
- (7b) Paljonko[tuollainen auto] maksaa?
‘How much does [**that kind of car**] cost?’ (Karlsson 1999:139)
- (7c) [Tuollainen väri] ei sovi sinulle.
‘[**That kind of color**] does not suit you.’ (Dasinger 1995:188)

These patterns form an interesting contrast when compared with the ‘unfamiliar entity’ uses observed with *sellainen*. Ex.(7a,b,c) suggest that with *tällainen/tuollainen*, the speaker is making reference to the properties of a certain class of entities in situations where the addressee either knows those properties or can perceive them in some way, whereas with *sellainen*, the speaker can signal that the hearer may not be familiar with the properties of a particular entity. However, because the behavior of *tällainen/tuollainen* in naturalistic speech has not been analyzed in detail in prior work, it is not yet known whether *tällainen/tuollainen* also allow for such ‘unfamiliar’ contexts.

3. Corpus Study

To gain a better sense of the referential properties of *sellainen/tällainen/tuollainen* when used as prenominal modifiers in naturally-occurring speech, I conducted an elicitation-based corpus study with 29 native Finnish speakers. As we will see in this section, the results suggest that the ‘unfamiliar entity’ use, which has received considerable attention in the prior work on Finnish, is not sufficient to capture the ways in which the demonstrative articles are used in natural speech.

3.1 Elicitation

In the elicitation phase, participants narrated the story of a wordless children's picture book (Mercer Mayer's *Frog, where are you?*) to a listener who could not see the pictures. This was done to avoid deictic uses of demonstratives. (As a result, due to the lack of a shared visual context between speaker and addressee, we also do not find any examples of *tällainen/tuollainen* akin to those shown in ex.(7a,b,c).) Twenty-nine Finnish adults between the ages of 18 and 58 participated. Each person had the chance to look through the book beforehand, and could also look at the book while telling the story. Thus, the corpus consists of 29 versions of the same story, which allows for detailed comparisons across speakers. This book has been used in many elicitation studies with children and adults (see CHILDES database). The story is about a boy, his dog and a pet frog who escapes. A summary is in the Appendix of this paper. Pictures are online at <http://chilides.psy.cmu.edu/manuals/frog.pdf>

3.2 Results

3.2.1 Distribution and Frequency

Overall, slightly more than half of the participants (15/29, 52%) use the demonstrative adjectives *sellainen*, *tällainen*, or *tuollainen* (or their phonological variants) to introduce new referents into their narratives, and the most frequent users tend to be the younger speakers. *Sellainen* was the most frequently used demonstrative adjective, both in terms of how many people use it and how many occurrences of *sellainen* there are in the corpus.

There are 83 occurrences of demonstrative adjectives in the entire corpus, all of which were used when introducing new entities into the discourse, and 45 of these (54.2%) are cases of *sellainen*. There are 24/83 (28.9%) occurrences of *tällainen* and only 14/83 (16.9%) occurrences of *tuollainen*. If we look at what kinds of demonstrative adjectives each person uses, we see a similar pattern. Out of the 15 people who use the adjectives, 14 (93.3%) use *sellainen* at least once, and for 7 of these 14, it is the only one out of the three adjectives that they use. *Tällainen* and *tuollainen* are used less frequently: 6 people use *tällainen* and 5 use *tuollainen* in their narratives. Only three people use all three modifiers. Thus, overall, *sellainen* is the most commonly used demonstrative adjective, followed by *tällainen* and then *tuollainen*.

Interestingly, we find that the same referents are modified by different adjectives by different speakers, as illustrated by ex. (8a,b) for *puunrunko* 'tree trunk' and (8c,d) for *jyrkänne* 'precipice, cliff.'

- (8a) siellä lammikon vieressä oli [**tämmönen** ontto puunrunko]...
'Next to the pond there was [TÄMMÖINEN hollow tree trunk]'

- (8b) ja sitten se poikaa huomaa että on [**semmonen** ontto puunrunko]...
‘and then the boy notices that there’s [SEMMONEN hollow tree trunk]...’
- (8c) tää peura juoksee [**tommosen** jyrkänteen] reunalle
‘this deer runs to the edge of [TOMMONEN cliff]’
- (8d) ja hirvi lähtee menemään eteenpäin, tulee [**semmosen** valtavan jyrkänteen] juurelle
‘and the moose starts to go forward, comes to the edge of [SEMMONEN huge cliff]’

Given this apparent interchangeability, combined with the relatively small numbers of *tällainen* and *tuollainen*, in this paper I group the three demonstratives together. However, I want to emphasize that to assess the validity of this grouping, future research should be conducted with larger numbers of tokens. It may be that the different demonstratives that form the roots of the demonstrative adjectives contribute to differences in meaning, but the current corpus patterns (Section 3.2.2) suggest that potential differences along these lines are not crucial to our current claims.

3.2.2 What Kinds of Referents are Marked with Demonstrative Adjectives?

Let us now consider what guides the use of demonstrative adjectives. As mentioned above, all occurrences of demonstrative adjectives in my corpus involved reference to entities being mentioned for the first time. However, not all new entities are introduced with demonstrative adjectives.

When we look at how new entities are introduced, it becomes clear that all three forms are used in this context (ex.9,10, see also Vilkuna (1992) and Dasigner (1995) on *sellainen*). In ex. (9), the narrator mentions, for the first time, a rock that the boy climbs onto, and ex.(10) introduced the cliff into the narrative (see ex.8a for *tällainen*).

- (9) se ... kiipes [**semmoselle** korkeelle kivelle]
‘he ... climbed onto [SEMMONEN high rock]’
- (10) tää peura juoksee [**tommosen** jyrkänteen] reunalle
‘this deer runs to the edge of [TOMMONEN cliff]’

However, not all new entities are marked with *sellainen*, *tällainen* or *tuollainen*. A comparison of the narratives across the 29 participants reveals that some referents, when introduced for the first time, are not marked with a demonstrative adjective. As illustrated below, entities such as *koira* ‘dog’ (ex.11) *ikkuna* ‘window’ (ex.12) and *metsä* ‘forest’ (ex.13) are introduced without the adjectives (absence of adjective is denoted by \emptyset).

- (11a) ja sit siellä on myös **koira**
 ‘and then there’s ø **dog** too.’
- (11b) pikkupoika ja **koira** sanovat hyvää yötä sammakolle
 ‘little boy and ø **dog** say good night to frog’
- (12a) sitten Pekka katseli **ikkunasta** ulos
 ‘then Pekka looked out of ø **window**’
- (12b) sit ne kurkistaa **ikkunasta**
 ‘then they peek out of ø **window**.’
- (13a) siellä näkyy **metsä**
 ‘ø **forest** is visible there’
- (13b) sitten sitä lähtee kumminkin molemmat lähtevät sitten **metsään**
 ‘then both still go to ø **forest**’

On the other hand, there is a limited group of referents that, across speakers, often get marked with *sellainen*, *tällainen* or *tuollainen* when they are first introduced. In the following discussion, when considering how often a certain entity is introduced with or without a demonstrative adjective, I only consider the 15 participants who use the demonstrative adjectives at least once. In other words, I only look at cases where the speaker is making a choice between using a demonstrative adjective and not using one. Examples of often-modified nouns include ‘rock’ (14a), ‘cliff’ (14b,c) and ‘tree trunk/log’ (14d,e), as exemplified below. Other referents are also frequently modified, such as a pond that the boy and dog fall into, a mole hole that the boy peeks into, a deer that they encounter in the course of their adventures, and a glass jar that the frog sits in.

- (14a) se pöllö ajoi Peten [**semmosen** ison kiven] päälle ja...jossa sitten Peten rupes taas huutelemaan Samppia
 ‘the owl drove Pete on top of [**SEMMONEN** big rock] and...from where Pete started again to call for Samppi [frog]’
- (14b) ja sit siihen tulikin [**semmoisen** kieleke] ja se peura pysähty yhtäkkiä ja sitten pete ja hauva tippu alas sieltä kielekkeeltä
 ‘and then there appeared [**SEMMOINEN** cliff] and the deer stopped suddenly and then pete and doggie fell down from the cliff’
- (14c) tää peura juoksee [**tommosen** jyrkänteen] reunalle
 ‘this deer runs to the edge of [**TOMMONEN** cliff]’
- (14d) ja se oli [**semmosen** vanhan puunrungon] takana ja siel ne yritti sitten kurkkia
 ‘And it (a noise) was behind [**SEMMONEN** old tree trunk] and there they tried to peek’
- (14e) Sitten siinä on [**semmonen** puunrunko] vieressä
 ‘then there is [**SEMMONEN** tree trunk] nearby.’

A closer look at the modification patterns reveals strikingly high rates of modifier usage, especially for some of the referents. For example, with ‘tree trunk,’ out of the people who use modifiers and who mention the tree trunk, 79% modify it with a demonstrative adjective when mentioning it for the first time. This number rises to 92% if we focus only on those people who use demonstrative adjectives more than twice in their narratives, i.e., speakers who are ‘active’ users of the demonstrative adjectives. Similarly, with the cliff, out of the people who use modifiers and who mention the cliff, 75% modify it with a demonstrative adjective when mentioning it for the first time. This number rises to 100% if we focus only on those people who use demonstrative modifiers more than twice in their narratives. In the next section, we consider why some entities are more susceptible to being modified by *sellainen/tällainen/tuollainen* than others.

4. What Do Demonstrative Adjectives Signal to the Addressee?

In light of the patterns mentioned in the preceding section, let us now return to the question of why some referents are prone to modification with *sellainen*, *tällainen* or *tuollainen*, whereas others are not. In Section 2, I mentioned the ‘unfamiliar entity’ use, according to which speakers use these modifiers when introducing entities whose properties s/he suspects the addressee does not know or is unfamiliar with. However, at least at first glance, nouns like ‘rock’, ‘cliff’ and ‘tree trunk’ (ex.14d,e) are unlike ‘Tiroli bread’ (ex.6a) or ‘school garden’ (ex.6b), because they are familiar entities whose characteristics the addressee presumably is familiar with. Thus, the ‘unfamiliar entity’ use does not appear to be sufficient to characterize the use of these modifiers.

What about the noteworthiness idea proposed by Ionin (2006), on the basis of earlier observations by Maclaren (1982) and Prince (1981)? Ionin suggests that in English, indefinite *this* is used when the referent has some noteworthy property and that further information about the referent will be provided.

This idea seems applicable to the Finnish data as well. An analysis of the narratives suggests that the nouns that speakers choose to modify with a demonstrative adjective tend to be atypical, difficult to name, or have something ‘odd’ or significant about them. For example, the rock is unusual and significant for the plot of the book because it turns out that the tree branches which the boy uses for balance when standing on it are in fact the antlers of a deer hidden behind the rock.⁴ The boy gets caught in the antlers and is carried by the deer to the edge of a cliff, at which point the boy falls out of the antlers and over the cliff’s edge.

⁴ The size of the rock is also difficult to convey linguistically in Finnish. The rock is bigger than the boy, but in Finnish *kivi* is used for both rocks and stones, regardless of size. Interestingly, English speakers mostly used ‘rock’ (11/12 people used ‘rock’, data from the Slobin corpus, CHILDES database). Thus, in Finnish, the size of the rock may be another reason why speakers use a demonstrative adjective (to signal that the noun is not sufficiently informative about size).

The cliff which the boy and the dog fall off of – mostly referred to as *jyrkänne* ‘precipice’ or *kieleke* ‘promontory’ – is another illustrative example. In the story, it is a grassy area within a forest that suddenly ends in a steep slope, but it is not very high. A word such as *jyrkänne* tends to evoke images of high cliffs; usually, if one falls off a cliff, one does not escape unscathed. However, the boy and his dog tumble only a meter or two to the pond beneath the cliff. Thus, by using the modified phrase *sellainen/tällainen/tuollainen jyrkänne*, the narrator is able to signal to the hearer that the precipice in the story does not match the typical image of what a precipice looks like. The tree trunk which the boy and the dog encounter towards the end of the story is also frequently modified. It plays a significant role in the plot after its initial introduction, because it turns out that the frog that they are searching for is hidden behind the tree trunk.

As a whole, these patterns fit well with the general idea of ‘noteworthiness’, proposed by Ionin (2006) for English. However, it is important to emphasize that these observations are only preliminary and still somewhat speculative in nature. Larger-scale corpus work or experiments are needed to assess the validity of these claims. Nevertheless, the patterns that can be observed in my data contribute both to our understanding of when Finnish speakers use demonstrative adjectives and to the notion of ‘noteworthiness.’ More specifically, the Frog Story data offer new insights from actual language use into what can count as noteworthy: Entities that are atypical/odd exemplars of their class as well as entities that have something else significant about them (see also footnote 4).

4.1 Unifying Two Seemingly Disparate Uses

If we combine the insights from prior research with the patterns observed in the Frog Story corpus, we see that the demonstrative adjectives are used in two seemingly disparate ways, namely (i) the *unfamiliar entity use* and (ii) the *noteworthy use*. At first glance, these two contexts may seem rather unrelated and perhaps even contradictory. However, I propose they share a crucial commonality: In both cases, use of the demonstrative modifier signals the *speaker’s awareness that the addressee needs further information*. More specifically, use of a demonstrative adjective signals that the noun itself is not sufficient for the addressee to arrive at the intended denotation, because (i) the addressee is not familiar with the meaning of the noun (e.g. *Tiroli bread*, ex.6a), (ii) the noun is an atypical/odd exemplar of its class (e.g. *cliff*, ex.14b,c), or (iii) the noun has some other important /significant property that cannot be directly inferred from its semantics (e.g. *rock* with hidden deer, ex.14a). I would argue that situations (ii) and (iii) are sub-types of the ‘noteworthy’ use, whereas situation (i) embodies the ‘unfamiliar entity’ use.

The idea that use of a demonstrative adjective signals this kind of *informational insufficiency* is further supported by the observation that quite often, the

speaker follows up the *sellainen/tällainen/tuollainen* + NP combination with further information about the intended referent. This suggests that the speaker realizes the addressee needs more information before speaker can accomplish his/her communicative goals, and resembles findings for English indefinite *this* (see Prince 1981, Ionin 2006).

4.1.1 Behavior of ‘Placeholders’ and Names

The idea that the demonstrative adjectives signal speakers’ awareness of addressees needing further information is supported by their frequent occurrence in contexts where speakers cannot retrieve the right word and use a ‘filler’/placeholder word (e.g. *thingy*, *whatchamacallit*). For example, in ex.(15a) the speaker used *sellainen* to modify the under-informative noun *juttu* ‘thing’, and then goes on to provide more details about the object. Another type of context where *sellainen* is used is in (15b), where the speaker uses it to modify a proper name that s/he suspects may not be familiar to the addressee. Again, more information about the referent is provided immediately afterwards:

- (15a) [*talking about an ice-cream shaped luggage tag*] Sille mä annoin ...
laukkuun kiinnetettävän [semmosen jutun] mihin voi kirjottaa nimen ja
osotteen ja se oli jätskin muotonen. (from a blog at www.novita.fi)
‘To her [my friend] I gave [SEMMONEN thing] that attaches to a bag where
you can write your name and address and it is shaped like an ice-cream’
- (15b) Kun meillä on ollu [semmonen Arja Jokine] joka on ollu täällä meillä täs
tämmösessä oikeakielisyydestä puhumas mä en tiä tunnek sä [semmost
tyttöö] (corpus example from Hakulinen et al 2005)
‘as we’ve had [SEMMONEN Arja Jokine] who has been here with us talking
about correct language usage I don’t know if you know [SEMMONEN girl]’

4.2. Types of Information Insufficiency

So far, we have focused mostly on cases that could be termed ‘denotational insufficiency’. We have seen examples where the information provided by the NP was insufficient for the addressee because: (i) s/he does not know the full meaning of the noun (*unfamiliar entity use*), (ii) the default representation triggered by the noun is potentially misleading or does not convey the full significance of the referent (*noteworthy uses*) or (iii) the noun itself is underspecified (‘thing’ in ex.15a). Generally speaking, these are cases where the addressee lacks information to construct an accurate denotation of the noun. However, we also find evidence for *sellainen* signaling referential insufficiency – i.e., being used in situations where the denotation of the NP is unproblematic, but the addressee needs more info about the referent. In ex.(16), the addressee can presumably

construct an appropriate semantic representation of the NP ‘man’. However, s/he also needs to know that the man may be his/her father – i.e., the referent of *sellainen* + NP is what matters (cf. ex.14b,c with *cliff*). Thus, it seems that speakers can use *sellainen* to signal not only denotational insufficiency but also referential insufficiency to addressees. (Further research is needed to see how well these patterns extend to *tällainen/tuollainen*.)

- (16) Kun meillä on tuolla kyydissä [**semmoinen** mies] – se on suoraan sanoen kyllä höperö, dementti. Mutta kun se väittää olevansa sinun isäs. (corpus example from Hakulinen et al 2005)
‘Well we have in the car [**SEMMOINEN** man] – honestly speaking, he is out of it, has dementia. But he claims to be your father.’

5. Conclusions

Based on naturally-occurring corpus data and elicited narratives, I suggest that seemingly contradictory/unrelated uses of the demonstrative adjective+NP (*sellainen/tuollainen/tällainen*+NP) structure in Finnish, used to introduce specific indefinites, are unified by a common property. In particular, the idea is that a speaker uses the demonstrative adjectives to introduce a new referent when s/he is realizes that more information than what is provided by the NP is necessary for the addressee to arrive at the intended/correct denotation of the NP or to locate the intended referent.

In addition to furthering our knowledge of referent introduction in Finnish and relating to existing work on indefinites in English (e.g. Ionin 2006), the phenomena discussed here suggest that a referent’s immediate persistence – i.e., how likely it is to be brought up again in the immediately subsequent discourse – is sensitive to the ‘informational sufficiency’ of the form initially used to introduce it into the discourse. The less informative the initial form is, the more likely the referent is to be mentioned again in subsequent discourse (see also Chiriacescu and von Heusinger 2009, 2010 on topic-shift patterns in Romanian).

In closing, it is worth re-iterating that these findings are still preliminary, and a larger-scale corpus study or elicitation experiment is needed to assess the validity of these claims and also to shed light on potential differences between the different kinds of demonstratives (proximal, distal, neutral).

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Appendix: Summary of “Frog, where are you?”. This a shortened version of the summary in the CHILDES manual at: <http://childes.psy.cmu.edu/manuals>. The pictures are available at <http://childes.psy.cmu.edu/manuals/frog.pdf>

p.1: A boy and his dog are in the boy’s bedroom admiring a smiling frog in a glass jar. **p.2:** The boy and the dog are asleep in the boy’s bed. The frog is climbing out of the jar. **p.3:** The boy and the dog are awake and have observed that the frog is missing. **p.4:** The boy is looking in one of his boots for the frog while the dog has stuck his head in the frog’s jar. **p.5:** The boy and the dog are looking out the window. **p.6:** The dog is falling out the window and the boy looks puzzled. **p.7:** The boy has come outside and is holding the dog. The jar has broken and pieces are lying on the ground. **p.8-9:** The boy is calling and the dog is sniffing with his nose in the air. In the distance is a forest. A beehive is hanging in a tree by the edge of the forest. **p.10:** The boy is calling down a hole in the ground while the dog is jumping up toward the beehive. **p.11:** A small ground rodent has popped out of the hole. The boy is holding his nose and looking unhappy. **p.12-13:** The beehive has fallen out of the tree and angry bees are swarming. The boy is sitting on a branch of a large tree exploring a hole in the tree. **p.14-15:** An owl, has come out of the hole and the boy has fallen on the ground. The bees are chasing the dog. **p.16:** The boy is running away from the owl. In the background is a large boulder. Branches of trees can be seen behind it. **p.17:** The boy has climbed to the top of the boulder and is calling. He is holding a branch. The dog can be seen slinking toward the boulder. **p.18:** What appeared to be branches are, in fact, the antlers of a deer. The boy can be seen draped over the deer’s head. **p.19:** The deer is walking, with the boy on his head, toward a cliff. **p.20:** The deer has tipped the boy over the edge of the cliff and the dog has apparently fallen off the cliff. Both the boy and the dog are in the midst of falling into a marshy pond. **p.21:** The boy and the dog have fallen head first into the water. **p.22:** The boy is sitting in the water and the dog is sitting on the boy’s shoulder. The boy is holding his hand to his ear and smiling, as if he has heard something. **p.23:** The boy is kneeling beside a large log. The dog is swimming toward him. **p.24:** The boy and the dog are looking over the log. **p.25:** The boy and the dog are sitting on the log and are looking at a mother and father frog. **p.26:** The frogs’ children emerge from tall grasses on the right. The boy and the dog are sitting on the log. **p.27-28:** The boy and the dog are leaving. The boy has a small frog in his hand and is waving at the frog family, which is sitting on the big log.