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Siwi addressee agreement and demonstrative typology

Abstract: Siwi, a Berber language of Egypt, shows gender / number agreement of medial demonstratives with the addressee. Such phenomena are cross-linguistically very rarely reported, and are not discussed in major surveys of the typology of demonstratives (DIESEL 1999; IMAI 2003). However, within person-oriented demonstrative systems, such marking amounts to an iconic representation of addressee anchoring. The pragmatics of Siwi demonstratives thus cast light on the nature of the mapping from person to place that such systems reflect (GREENBERG 1985). Comparative eastern Berber data suggests that demonstrative addressee agreement may be more widespread than the literature reflects.

Keywords: Berber, agreement, demonstratives, person-oriented, allocutivity

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1. Introduction

Typological parameters relevant to the description of demonstrative systems have been the subject of extensive investigation (DIESEL 1999; IMAI 2003). One of the best-known is distance-oriented vs. person-oriented (for IMAI, addressee-isolated vs. dual-anchor). The latter type, with a proximal ‘near speaker’ and a medial ‘near hearer’, has been recognised for over a century (BRUGMANN 1904; ANDERSON & KEENAN 1985). Such systems amount to a mapping of space with reference to the participants; as GREENBERG (1985:277) put it, “person becomes the model for place as the icon.” This would make person markers on the appropriate demonstrative terms iconic. In principle, their incorporation should entail demonstrative agreement with the addressee, producing addressee agreement.

This phenomenon is, in practice, hardly ever reported: addressee agreement is absent from even the most extensive available cross-linguistic typological surveys of demonstrative systems. However, Siwi – a Berber language spoken in western Egypt – is one of the very few languages worldwide to use addressee agreement productively on demonstratives. (To the best of my knowledge, the only other

exceptions reported are Qur’ānic Arabic and Rāziḥī Arabic; cf. WATSON (2006b:48).) As such, Siwi provides a unique window onto the mechanics of the mapping from person to distance, as well as illustrating a parameter that needs to be taken into account in language documentation.

2. Demonstratives in Siwi

2.1 General description

Pro/ad-nominal demonstratives in Siwi are inflected for number and gender (masculine/feminine), like 75% and 45% respectively of the 85 languages in DIESSEL (1999: 25); Siwi, however, distinguishes gender only in the singular. Adnominal demonstratives are formed from pronominal ones by adding a prefix *da-* (*ta-* in F.SG); presentatives (“here is...”) by prefixing *y-* (*x-* in F.SG). In adverbial/locative contexts, where there is no referent with agreement features, the stems are proximal *-a*, medial *-ok* (etc.), distal *-ih*. Demonstrative adverbs of manner are formed by suffixing these to *ams-*. Specific location is formed by suffixing them to *gd-* (also used in Siwi as the pre-pronominal allomorph of “in”); vague location (IMAI 2003), to *ss-* (cp. *s* “from”). (Specific location is incompatible with distal *-ih*, presumably because the distal includes no anchor.)

Siwi has three distances, along with 38% of the 234 languages sampled in WALS (DIESSEL 2011). While the difference in form between the *wa* and *waya* series below suggests a fourth distance, no difference in reference has been observed, and speakers themselves describe *wa* as just an “abbreviation” of *waya*.

Place-holders (“whatchamacallit”) use the synchronically distinct series *wihin* (M.SG, PL) / *tihin* (F.SG), historically deriving from distals, exemplifying a cross-linguistically common usage (HAYASHI & YOON 2006); these are nouns, and can even be modified by adnominal demonstratives, eg *wihin dawok* “that whatsit”.

So far, this is typologically unexceptional. However, as shown by Table 1 (adapted from SOUAG 2010), it also features a phenomenon requiring closer attention: the medial term varies in form according to the gender and number of the addressee.

Table 1: Demonstratives in Siwi

	Proximal	Medial (to man)	Medial (to woman)	Medial (to group)	Distal
Pronominal: M.SG	<i>wa(ya)</i>	<i>wok</i>	<i>wom</i>	<i>werwən</i>	<i>wih</i>
– F.SG	<i>ta(ya)</i>	<i>tok</i>	<i>tom</i>	<i>terwən</i>	<i>tih</i>
- PL	<i>wi(yya)</i>	<i>wiyyok</i>	<i>wiyyom</i>	<i>wiyyerwən</i>	<i>widin</i>
Adnominal: M.SG	<i>dawa(ya)</i>	<i>dawok</i>	<i>dawom</i>	<i>dawerwən</i>	<i>dawih</i>
– F.SG	<i>tata(ya)</i>	<i>tatok</i>	<i>tatom</i>	<i>taterwən</i>	<i>tatih</i>
- PL	<i>dawi(yya)</i>	<i>dawiyyok</i>	<i>dawiyyom</i>	<i>dawiyyerwən</i>	<i>dawidin</i>
Presentative: M.SG	<i>ywa(ya)</i>	<i>ywok</i>	<i>ywom</i>	<i>ywerwən</i>	<i>ywih</i>
– F.SG	<i>xta(ya)</i>	<i>xtok</i>	<i>xtom</i>	<i>xterwən</i>	<i>xtih</i>
– PL	<i>ywi(yya)</i>	<i>ywiyyok</i>	<i>ywiyyom</i>	<i>ywiyyerwən</i>	<i>ywidin</i>
Locative	<i>gda(ya)</i>	<i>gdok</i>	<i>gdom</i>	<i>gderwən</i>	-
Approximate locative	<i>ssa</i>	<i>ssok</i>	<i>ssom</i>	<i>sserwən</i>	<i>ssih</i>
Manner adverb	<i>amsa</i>	<i>amsok</i>	<i>amsom</i>	<i>amserwən</i>	<i>amsih</i>

2.2 Addressee agreement

The agreement of the medial demonstrative with the addressee is illustrated by the following minimal pairs, mostly from a retelling of the story of Joseph:

Standalone medial, referent = M.SG, different addressees:

- 1 *yə-ṁṁ-as:* *a* *wəldi...* ***wo-k*** *xer* *a-zuwwar*
3M-say-3SG.DAT: oh son... DEM.M-2:M good M-great
He told him: O my son... **that** is a great good.
- 2 *yə-ṁṁ-as* *i* *talt-ənnəs:* ***wo-m*** *ge-yə-ṁfu-yanax*
3M-say-3SG.DAT to woman-3SG.GEN: DEM.M-2:F IRR-3M-benefit-1PL.DAT
He told his wife: **this one** will benefit us.
- 3 *yə-ṁṁ-asən:* ***we-rwən*** *aggwid* *n* *rəḅḅi*
3M-say-3PL.DAT: DEM.M-2:PL man GEN God
He told them: **this** is a man of God.

Modifying medial, referent = F.SG., different addressees:

- 4 *tasútət ta-tó-k tälla múddət-laʃmər*
 palm_tree MOD-DEM.F-2:M 3F.be_at lifetime
That palm tree has been around for ages. (addressing male researcher)
- 5 *ántf-ax twərdət ta-tó-m msabb-ki*
 pick-1SG flower MOD-DEM.F-2:F because-2F
 I picked **this** flower for your (f.) sake.
- 6 *mm^wi-γ-asín-a i itadəm-ənnəw:*
 say-1SG-3PL.DAT-PRF to people-1SG.GEN
g-úsəd g əʃarbiyya ta-té-rwən
 IRR.3M-come in car MOD-DEM.F-2:PL
 I told my family: he will come in **that** car.

The suffixes used to mark addressee agreement on the medial demonstrative are closely parallel to the 2nd person prepositional object suffixes: 2M.SG -ək, 2F.SG -əm, 2PL -wən.

The most obvious typological comparison for addressee agreement is verbal allocutivity – a phenomenon best known from Basque (ALBERDI 1995), but also attested in several other languages (ANTONOV 2010). Verbal allocutivity is typically restricted to main clauses rather than subordinate clauses. Addressee agreement, however, occurs irrespective of the level of syntactic embedding, as illustrated by multiply layered possessives:

- 7 *y-wé-rwən ʃʃáhəb n jír n aggwid da-wé-rwən*
 PRSV-DEM.M-2:PL friend GEN child GEN man MOD-DEM.M-2:PL
Here is **that** man's child's friend.

and multiply embedded subordinate clauses:

- 8 *mm^wi-γ-asín-a nə-xs-á aʃənʃən ənni ga-nə-ħmər-wət*
 say-1SG-3PL.DAT-PRF 1PL-want-PFV to_sit_down COMP IRR-1PL-look-PL.IMP
mámək ga-nəttáws-as i aggwid da-wé-rwən
 how IRR-1PL-help-3SG.DAT to man MOD-DEM.M-2:PL
 I told them that we want to sit down to look at how to help **that** man.

Addressee agreement must be self-consistent; when the following inconsistent sentence was proposed to him, my consultant reacted “As long as you're saying *ga-š-γ-ak* (2M.DAT), you say *da-wo-k* [MOD-DEM.M-2:M]”:

- 9 **ga-š-y-ak* *ssanduq* *da-wó-m*
 *IRR-give-1SG-2M.DAT box MOD-DEM.M-2:F
 I will give you that box.

As the following sentence illustrates, there is no such inconsistency between a singular addressee and a plural 2nd person pronoun; after all, an object can equally well simultaneously be close to a whole group and to a single member of it:

- 10 *ga-š-y-áwən* *ssanduq* *da-w-ók*
 IRR-give-1SG-2PL.DAT box MOD-DEM.M-2:M
 I will give you that box.

2.2 Usage of the medial

As we expect from the presence of addressee agreement on the medial term, the Siwi demonstrative system is speaker/addressee-anchored. The nature of this anchoring needs closer examination, since, as well as marking spatial location, but demonstratives serve several other discourse and information structure functions.

The system is most clearly revealed in accessibility contrasts: items only accessible to the speaker use the proximal, ones accessible to the listener use the medial, and ones inaccessible to both the distal. When an item is equally associated with or accessible to the speaker and the addressee, the medial series is preferred. Thus, in the following examples¹, the speaker was watching a film, while the listener could not see the screen but could hear the sound, yielding the following contrast:

- 11 *áh, wo-k əlháss n tiyéda*
 ah DEM.M-2:M sound GEN goats
 Ah, **this** is the sound of goats.
- 12 *tyátt tú-ta ššəkl-ənnəs n-azəgru.*
 goat MOD-DEM.F shape-3SG.GEN [goat sp.]
 This goat looks like a *n-azəgru* (breed).

Most Berber demonstrative systems include separate anaphoric forms for marking old information, eg Kabyle *-nni* (METTOUCHI 2011). In Siwi, no such form exists; rather, the medial demonstrative is typically used, marking the information as accessible to the listener. For instance (describing a festival, many months away):

- 13 *i-šəmmá-n [...] ə n-asəqqəd n mjárdag.*
 3-cook.IPFV-PL uh GEN-to_make_hot GEN mjardag.

¹ All Siwi data is from the author's fieldwork unless otherwise indicated.

They cook ... uh, *mjardag* stew (made of bread and meat).

wó-k *lázəm itádəm nnúba ge-y-čč-ən.*
 DEM.M-2:M must people all IRR-3-eat-PL.
This, all the people must eat.

The same applies, naturally, to recognitional usages:

- 14 *tšáttət, tó-k* *wən t-šəmmar tə-ššáy-a əlšárjun n téni.*
 rachis DEM.F-2:M REL 3F-be.IPFV 3F-hold-PRF cluster GEN date
 The rachis is **that** thing that holds the date clusters (in place).
 (referring to palm trees; no palm tree was visible or previously mentioned)

Conversely, items new to the discourse – notably including the topics of questions – are usually marked with the proximal demonstrative:

- 15 *hánta wa i-təmma-n-as?*
 what? DEM.M 3-say.IPFV-PL-3SG.DAT?
 What do they call **this/that**?
- 16 *táya tšáttət.*
 DEM.F rachis
 This is the rachis. (showing the parts of a bird trap; no previous mention.)

This discourse-oriented usage often overrides both spatial considerations:

- 17 *hánta wáya wən ənnij g əssmá?*
 what? DEM.M REL up in sky
 What is that up there in the sky?

and considerations of accessibility:

- 18a *hánta wáya wən zrá-tt sláttin?*
 what? DEM.M REL see-2SG>3M.ACC yesterday?
 What was that (thing) you saw yesterday?
- b *wó-k wən zrá-x-t sláttin izám*
 DEM.M-2:M REL see-1SG-3M.ACC yesterday gazelle
 That (thing) I saw yesterday was a gazelle.

The proximal terms have an additional function of expressing contrastive alternatives: “one... the other...” is *wa... wa...* This overrides spatial functions of the proximal-medial distinction, as in the following scenario:

A and B are sitting in a room with four books on the desk, two of them green. A tells B to go get the green book. B goes and puts his hand on one of them, and says: *wá?* / *wáya?* [This one?] A replies:

- 19 *ulá, wá.*
 no, DEM.M
 No, the other one.

Purely exophoric usages of the demonstrative system are also found. The clearest contrast is between proximal/medial demonstratives (near the conversational dyad) on the one hand and distal (away from the conversational dyad) on the other, as in:

- 20 *tó-k* *isiwan,* *t-ih* *ayərmi*
 DEM.F-2:M Siwa, DEM.F-DIST Aghurmi
 This is Siwa (where the speaker is), that's Aghurmi (another village).

Spatial contrasts between the proximal and medial series are also attested – thus, from a video explaining how a bird trap works (both first mentions):

- 21a *i-ḡmṡar* *yúr-əs* *əgdáya* *tasəmmátt, [...]*
 3M-be at-3SG here rope
 It (the trap) has a rope here [...] (side of trap closest to speaker)
- b *t-ḡmṡar* *t-ugil-a* *gdó-k*
 3F-be 3F-hang-PFV here-2:M
 It (the bait) gets suspended here. (further from speaker, closer to hearer)

However, the spatial distinction appears to be the least important function of the latter, in that it is normally overridden by accessibility (as in the following example), information status (as in 17), and even contrastiveness (as in 19).

- 22 *wó-k* *iləs-ənnəw*
 DEM.M-2:M tongue-1SG.GEN
 This is my tongue.

3 Addressee agreement and documentation gaps

The fact that in a typical elicitation situation the addressee is always the linguist is what has led to the omission of addressee agreement from previous descriptions of Siwi (LAOUST 1931; VYCIHL 2005), which give only M.SG addressee forms. There is reason to suspect a similar gap in other eastern Berber data. The closest relatives of Siwi, spoken in Libya, are the varieties of Sokna (SARNELLI 1924), El-Fogaha (PARADISI 1963). The two articles cited are the only published source of textual data

on these varieties, and it is not clear whether either is still spoken. Both, unusually for Berber but like Siwi, use a suffix *-k* in non-proximal demonstratives (Table 2).

No textual examples of the demonstrative in question are available for El-Fogaha, so nothing can be said about its usage there. For Sokna, the demonstrative in question occurs three times in the surviving text corpus (all in text IV, SARNELLI 1924:34), never in quoted speech, so there is no way to determine whether it shows addressee agreement. Two occurrences are in the context of a dialogue between a man and a king, both previously mentioned: “the man said to that king (*iyisséltān udînak*)... And he did not say to that man (*imâr udînak*) ...”. The third is temporal: “at that time (*děluqō*t eddînak*) they brought the king his supper”. In each case, its usage is anaphoric, like Siwi *wok*. If any speakers of either language remain, it would be very interesting to test their usage with non-masculine singular addressees.

Table 2: Demonstratives in Sokna and El-Fogaha

	proximal		distal	
	Sokna	El-Fogaha	Sokna	El-Fogaha
Pronominal: M.SG	<i>wā</i>	<i>wa</i>	<i>udînak</i>	<i>wenhāk</i>
– F.SG	<i>tā</i>	<i>ta</i>	<i>eddînak</i>	<i>tenhāk</i>
– M.PL	<i>ummā</i>	<i>wi</i>	<i>ummadînak</i>	<i>wenhāk</i>
– F.PL	<i>ntî</i>	<i>ti</i>	<i>ntidînak</i>	<i>tenhāk</i>
Adnominal	<i>eddâ</i>	SG <i>dda</i> , PL <i>ddi</i>	(= pronominal)	<i>ddén</i>
Presentative: M.SG	<i>ukkâ</i>	<i>akkâ</i>		
– F.SG	<i>ukettâ</i>	<i>akettâ</i>		
– M.PL	<i>ukummî</i>			<i>akkên</i>
– F.PL	<i>ukuttî</i>			<i>akettên</i>
Locative	<i>dā</i>			<i>denhāk</i>

Another somewhat promising case is to be found in the closest Berber neighbour of Siwi, the variety of Awjila (PARADISI 1960). This variety is not at all closely related to Siwi, but shows some signs of contact convergence. It, too, has a demonstrative in *-k*, contrasting with at least three other demonstrative series – more than any other variety examined thus far – none of whose usage has been described in any detail, as the vague and overlapping labels below suggest:

Table 3: Demonstratives in Awjila

	proximal	proximal	proximal	medial	distal
Pronominal: M.SG	<i>wá</i>	<i>wāya</i>	<i>wék</i>		<i>wíwan</i>
– F.SG	<i>tá</i>	<i>tāya</i>	<i>ték</i>		<i>tíwan</i>
– M.PL		<i>wîya</i>			<i>widânin</i>
– F.PL		<i>tîya</i>			<i>tidânin</i>
Adnominal: SG	<i>-é</i>	<i>-āya</i>	<i>-ék</i>	<i>-idîn</i>	<i>-íwan</i>
– PL		<i>-îya</i>	<i>-îyek</i>		<i>-idânîn</i>
Locative	<i>dîla</i>		<i>dîlak</i>		<i>dîlîwan</i>
Ablative	<i>sîla</i>		<i>sîlak</i>		<i>diššîwān</i>
Manner adverb			<i>túdîk</i>		

As noted by VAN PUTTEN (2013:125), PARADISI 1961 (the only published source for Awjila texts) provides two textual examples of the relevant demonstrative's usage, in a version of Aesop's fable of the Bundle of Sticks: "afterwards he told them: look, you are like these sticks (*tēgarîwîn-îyek*); if you gather yourselves together you will remain like these sticks (*am tēgarîwîn-îyāk*)". The context indicates that the sticks were in the hearers' hands; the apparent usage of the demonstrative here for indicating proximity to the hearers is again in line with the function of Siwi *wok*, suggesting a common history. Both of these examples are in quoted speech with a plural addressee, suggesting that addressee agreement, if it exists at all in Awjila, is not obligatory. However, comparison with Siwi example 10 above shows that this is not conclusive, since each individual stick was close to an

individual addressee, not to the group as a whole. In Awjila, too, the possibility of variable addressee agreement ought to be tested for in the event of further fieldwork.

4 Conclusion

The case of Siwi shows that the mapping of deixis onto person in person-oriented demonstrative systems can be iconically represented by the use of personal pronominal morphemes, leading to addressee agreement – a hitherto unrecognised form of deixis. In particular, addressee agreement is found both on listener-anchored spatial deictics and on listener-familiar anaphoric forms. While this phenomenon seems to be typologically unusual, the fact that linguists on the whole do not expect to find it and hence rarely look for it makes it likely that its frequency has been underestimated. Future documentation efforts, not only in Berber but also further afield, should test for this possibility.

Abbreviations

2:M/F/PL agreement with the masculine / feminine / plural addressee	IMP	imperative
	IPFV	imperfective
	IRR	irrealis
ACC	M	masculine
COMP	MOD	adnominal prefix
DAT	PL	plural
DEM	PRF	perfect
DIST	PRSV	presentative
F	REL	relative
GEN	SG	singular

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