

Demonstratives in Kina Rutul

The Rutul (Lezgian, East Caucasian) demonstrative system consists of three pronouns that are usually described as having the following meanings: *mi* 'this', *ha* 'that', *ti* 'that (far away)' (Alekseev 1994: 225; Maxmudova 2002: 187; Ibragimov 2004: 85).

As stated in (Anderson, Keenan 1985: 282; Schulze 2008: 247), most demonstrative systems with three oppositions in the world's languages can be divided into two types: *monocentric* (or distance-oriented) and *polycentric* (person-oriented). The main difference between the two types is in the meaning of the medial demonstrative. In monocentric systems the medial demonstrative is used when pointing to objects that are at some medial distance from the speaker, while in polycentric systems, it is defined relative to the addressee and is used to indicate objects that are closer to the addressee, and not to the speaker.

The Rutul demonstrative system, as it is described in (Maxmudova 2002: 187), is polycentric. The main goals of the current study are (i) to check whether Kina Rutul (an undescribed variant of Rutul spoken in the village of Kina, Rutulsky district, Dagestan) also has a polycentric system using experimental approach and (ii) to identify other factors (such as the visibility of the object) that may affect the choice of the demonstrative pronoun.

The data for this study were collected during field work in the village of Kina in July 2021. The study was conducted based on a questionnaire (Wilkins 1999) collected from 7 speakers of Kina Rutul of different ages. The questionnaire consists of 25 scenes in which the location of the speaker, the addressee, and the object that the speaker should point to are described.

The collected data allowed us to prove that the Kina Rutul demonstrative system is polycentric, since the medial demonstrative *ha* is used to denote the proximity of an object to the addressee. In addition, according to the results of the experiment, we made the following conclusions.

First, it was established that the medial demonstrative *ha* is rather used in situations where the speaker and the addressee are located far away from each other and do not constitute a single deictic center. Conversely, in situations where the object is closer to the addressee but at the same time is within the speaker's reach (the speaker points to a part of the addressee's body that is a few steps away), the proximal demonstrative *mi* is used more likely.

Second, the approximate distance from the deictic center to the object which the proximal demonstrative *mi* and distal *ti* denote was determined. The demonstrative *mi* is used when the object is located closer than a few steps from the speaker (and the addressee), while the distal *ti* is used to indicate objects located further.

Third, differences in the use of demonstratives depending on the visibility/invisibility of the object for the speaker/addressee were found. For example, in a situation where the object is close to the speaker and not to the addressee, but is invisible to the first, it is possible to use the medial demonstrative *ha*.

Forth, we found that the presence of the speaker and the addressee in the same room influences the choice of demonstrative: in situations where the object is in the same space with the addressee (in the same room), but closer to the speaker who is outside this space (near the window), the medial demonstrative *ha* (less often *ti*) is used, while the proximal demonstrative *mi* is not attested in this context.¹

Finally, we also found a difference in the use of demonstratives by speakers belonging to different generations: young speakers, unlike older ones, use the medial demonstrative *ha* less often.

References

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¹ Note that the object is visible to both the speaker and the addressee.