JUST ANY PRONOUN ANYWHERE?
PRONOUNS AND "NEW" DEMONSTRATIVES
IN NORWEGIAN¹

JANNE BONDI JOHANNESEN
UNIVERSITY OF OSLO
jannebj-AT-iln.uio.no

Abstract

In this paper, I investigate whether the pronominal system of feminine pronouns in Oslo Norwegian – one of very few pronouns to have seemingly retained some case distinctions – is still a case system. An alternative might be that just any pronoun can occur just anywhere, i.e., that there is a free choice. The investigation has been conducted using new and older spoken language material. I have found two things. First, there is no free choice between the pronouns; while the nominative one can be used in almost any position and with any syntactic function, the accusative one is more limited. The second finding is exciting: The Norwegian deictic system is more complex than hitherto known. In addition to spatial deixis, there is also grammatically encoded psychological deixis.

1 Introduction

The pronominal system in Norwegian has been the last set of words in the language to retain some case distinctions, but even here there are few. One might rightly ask whether just any pronoun can occur just anywhere, i.e. whether there is a free choice of pronouns in any given position. In the written variety of Eastern Norwegian, Bokmål, the feminine pronouns have retained their case. In this paper, we shall investigate whether these distinctions prevail in the spoken language. Two corpora of spoken Oslo dialect, recorded thirty years apart, will be used in the investigation: the new Norwegian Speech Corpus-Oslo (NoTa),² and the TAUS speech corpus.³

¹ I am grateful to Helge Lødrup, Thorstein Fretheim and two anonymous reviewers for valuable comments, and to Anne Marit Bødal, Kristin Hagen and Arne Martinus Lindstad for having been informants on the Sunnfjord dialect of Førde and the Hedmark dialects of Hamar and Stange, respectively.
² The NoTa corpus (of spoken Oslo Norwegian) is a web searchable corpus under development at the University of Oslo as of December 2005. It’s planned to be finished with 150 informants transcribed, audio and video-taped by March 2006. It is available at present from the web-address in the references at the end of this paper, but is presently only two thirds of the planned full size. The informants have been selected according to sociolinguistic variables such as age, gender, socio-economic, and geographical status. The codes on the examples
After a brief look at the Bokmål pronoun system, we shall investigate to what extent the feminine pronouns are used in various syntactic positions. It turns out that the nominative pronoun can be used in a variety of positions and functions, while the accusative pronoun is rarer. A more interesting result is that one of the uses of the pronoun turns out to be a deictic one. Investigating the data more fully, we see that Modern Spoken Norwegian has psychological deixis in addition to the well-known spatial deixis. More specifically, there is clearly a psychologically distal demonstrative in the Oslo dialect. Some dialects seem to have a proximal counterpart with at least some kinds of nouns (proper names), but this is not the case in the Oslo dialect.

2 The pronominal system of Bokmål Norwegian

For an overview of the pronominal system, let us take as a starting point the Norwegian Reference Grammar (Faarlund et al. 1997), which describes the system of the written language. Only the Bokmål variety will be presented here, since this is the one most frequently used in Eastern Norway, and also reflects the Oslo variety to the highest extent.

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<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Nominative</th>
<th>Accusative</th>
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<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; p.</td>
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<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; p. M</td>
<td>han</td>
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<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; p. F</td>
<td>hun [ho]</td>
<td>henne [ho]</td>
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<td>Plural</td>
<td>vi</td>
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<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; p.</td>
<td>dere</td>
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<tr>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; p.</td>
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We see that 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular masculine forms have syncretised (even though there is a separate accusative form still available). Thus, with masculine pronouns we get sentences such as:

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sentences are informant codes: F: Feminine, M:Masculine, digits:age, WO:West Oslo, RO: Rest of Oslo, H:High education, L:Low education. All the names taken from authentic sources and referring to non-public people used in the paper have been anonymised to Kjell Johan and Kirsten (for males and females, respectively), and to a smaller extent, to Signe and Andreas.

3 The TAUS corpus is a collection of Oslo speech from the 1970s, see Hanssen (1986), in the process of being transformed into a modern searchable web corpus.
It will be more interesting to focus on the feminine pronouns, where there is supposed to be a difference between *hun* (nominative) and *henne* (accusative).

Faarlund et al. (1997) say that the “main rule for use of the case-forms in modern Norwegian is that the nominative variety is used when the pronoun is a subject, and accusative when the pronoun is the complement of a verb, preposition or adjective” (Faarlund et al. 1997: 318, my translation). However, they also give some exceptions, and state that *hun* ‘she’ is occasionally used as an object or a preposition object, especially if the pronoun is a) modified by another phrase (their example is a relative clause), b) topicalised (object), c) a conjunct (op.cit. 1997: 322). The loss of case contrasts is not new; a hundred years ago, Larsen (1907: 28) said about the 3rd person plural nominative pronoun *de* ‘they’ that it had basically taken over from the accusative pronoun *dem* ‘them’ in the upper layers of the population. Many others have also discussed the pronominal case forms, see e.g. Lødrup (1982, 1984) and Papazian (1983, 1985). In the next section, we shall see what some of the facts are in the present day Oslo dialect.

3 The 3rd person singular feminine pronoun, *hun*, in Oslo

In this section, we shall look at various uses of the pronoun *hun*, and find that it is indeed used in many contexts which should clearly not be characterised as subject positions. Furthermore, we shall see that one of its uses is hitherto undescribed.

Let me spend some words on methodology before we continue. When a phenomenon is complicated and at odds with what is stated in the grammar books, it would be a problem to use standard written corpora as a data source, as written texts have clearly undergone critical proof reading following the given norms. At the same time, using one’s intuition as a grammarian in a topic like this is bound to be difficult, both since the norms for the written language are

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4 Larsen (1907:28-29)’s exact words: “Vulgærsprog er dette *dú* hittil ikke blitt, men opad er bruken derav også utenfor nominativ trængt så høit op, at det vel kun er særli litterært interesserte familier, hvor ikke yngre voksne barn sædvanlig siger: *jæi så *dú.*” [The use of 3pl nom in object position has not become common in the lower classes, but in the higher classes, only the very literary families have no children that use this nominative form in the object position.]
sieving into one’s judgements, and since one’s data might be too narrow and too uncreative. A corpus of spoken language is a solution to many of these problems. We shall look at the pronoun *hun* as it is used in the NoTa corpus, and even in the older TAUS collection. (Of course the web would also be a good source for non-standardised language, but there we have no knowledge of the dialects of the language users.) In the present version of the NoTa corpus, the nominative *hun* occurs nearly 700 times. Without going into a counting game, it is easy to find this nominative form used not only as a subject, but also as a direct object, the object of a preposition, in right dislocation, left dislocation etc. Most times, the pronoun was used on its own, but it was also used as a head modified by another phrase (15 times), and, surprisingly, as a prenominal determiner (22 times). We will briefly look at some examples from the corpus.

### 3.1 The pronoun *hun* as an unmodified phrase

The nominative *hun*, when functioning as a phrase on its own, can clearly occur in many more contexts than in subject positions. Below are some examples from the NoTa corpus. These contexts are others than those mentioned by Faarlund et al. (1987), and clearly show that the nominative *hun* can be used in a wide variety of positions.

(3) **Subject:**

*hun* fortjener en god karakter i gym
'She deserves a good grade in gym.' (F,18,RO,H)

(4) **Direct object:**

så når hun ikke var der så satt de og baksnakka *hun*
so when she not was there then sat they and back-talked her
'So when she wasn’t there they sat and talked about her behind her back.' (F,80y,RO,L)

(5) **P-object:**

jeg lånte filmer på *hun* hele tiden
'I borrowed films on her all the-time
‘I borrowed films in her name all the time.’ (M,21,RO,L)

(6) **Right dislocation:**

men du vet Kirsten rekker ikke dette *hun*
but you know Kirsten reaches not this she
‘But you know, Kirsten won’t have time for this, she won’t.’ (M,58,RO,L)
3.2 The pronoun *hun* as the head of a nominal phrase

The nominative *hun* is often modified by a phrase (a relative clause in the examples below), in which case it has some stress or tonal accent.\(^5\) Again, these pronoun phrases can occur in a variety of positions, such as subject, object, preposition complement, left dislocation etc., not just the typical subject positions:

(7) Subject:  
*hun som har stiftet Norsk erindringssenter* heter Kirsten  
she who has founded Norwegian Memory Centre is-called Kirsten  
‘The one who has founded the Norwegian Memory Centre is called Kirsten.’  
\((F,85,WO,H)\)

(8) Direct object:  
*du vet ... hun der som trengte noen å snakke med*  
you know she there who needed somebody to talk with  
‘You know, that one who needed somebody to talk to.’  
\((F,18y,RO,L)\)

(9) P-object:  
*nei dem skulle snakke med hun som hadde #*  
no them should talk with she who had  
‘No, they should talk to the one who had...’  
\((F,79,RO,L)\)

(10) Left dislocation:  
*hun som jeg snakket med i telefonen* hun sier at dette har du betalt  
siden 2003 she who I talked with in the-phone she says that this  
have you paid since 2003  
‘The one who I talked to on the phone, she says that this you have paid since 2003.’  
\((M, 84,WO,H)\)

3.3 The pronoun *hun* as a determiner

Using a corpus gives the added value of bringing examples of use to one’s attention that one might have overlooked. In this section, we see examples of the pronoun *hun* used as a nominal determiner. This use is not mentioned in Faarlund et al. (1997). Given that *hun* is a determiner in these examples, it is maybe not surprising that its mother phrase can occur in a variety of syntactic

\(^5\) There are other ways of analysing such examples, e.g. Lødrup (1982) regards similar examples with the pronoun *de* as a determiner plus an elided head noun. I will not pursue that here, but simply note that with such an analysis, there would be no difference between the examples in 3.2 and 3.3, which I think there is, not least semantically.
functions, but it is worth noting that the form is invariably the nominative form of the pronoun.

(11) Subject:
i dag da hun der vikaren kom
today when she there substitute came
‘Today, when that substitute came...’

(12) Direct object:
har du spurt hun Kirsten om det?
have you asked she Kirsten about it?
‘Have you asked that person Kirsten about it?’

(13) P-object:
hvordan går det med hun der venninna di?
how goes it with she there the-friend yours?
‘How is that friend of yours?’

(14) Left dislocation:
hun von der Lippe hun e hun e hadde lært seg skikkelig
she von der Lippe she ehm she ehm had taught herself properly
‘That woman von der Lippe, she had taught herself properly...’

(15) Right dislocation:
det var også en # en dame som ikke var god # hun moren til
it was also a # a woman who not was good # she the-mother to the-
venninne min
friend mine
‘There was also a woman who wasn’t very good, that mother of my
friend.’

The pronoun as determiner is a phenomenon that we shall discuss in section 4.

3.4 Other feminine pronoun forms

There are also other feminine pronoun forms in Oslo Norwegian, such as hu, ho, henner and a. They are all much less frequent than hun. There are only 77 occurrences of henne, the accusative form of the pronoun. It occurs as direct object (fronted once), indirect object and preposition complement in the NoTa corpus, divided equally between the geographical parts of Oslo. It never occurs as a subject. There are no examples of the more colloquial henner. There are
some examples of *ho* and some of *a*, both of which are neutralised between nominative and accusative.

The pronoun *a* is not represented in the table in Faarlund et al. (table 1), since it is considered to be part of the spoken, not the written language. But Faarlund et al. (1997: 322) describe it elsewhere, saying that is a clitic pronoun with no case-difference – *a* can be used both as subject and object as long as it is in a clitic position. Bull (1980) similarly says that the clitic pronouns can be used as subject as well as object. In the NoTa material, the examples of use of the pronoun *a* are confined to subject and determiner (the lack of object use is probably linked to the lack of objects throughout the corpus):

(16) **Subject:**
Tidligere så jobba *a* for et firma som het Galleberg
‘Earlier, she worked for a company called Galleberg.’
(M,44, RO, H)

(17) **Determiner:**
Jeg har ... hilst på *a* Karoline Bjørnsson
‘I have met Karoline Bjørnsson.’
(F,84, WO, H)

4 Pronouns as determiners – a “new” demonstrative

In section 3.3, we saw that the pronoun *hun* can be a pre-nominal determiner. In this section we shall investigate whether this determiner is related to the well-known preproprial determiner found in many Norwegian dialects. We shall investigate its pragmatics, and will see that it is a “new”, in the sense of not being mentioned in Faarlund (1997). However, it is mentioned in very recent literature, viz. Delsing (2003) and Julien (2005).

One might be tempted to think that the prenominal determiner above is related to the preproprial determiner attested in many dialects (including older versions of the Oslo dialect). Let us start by exemplifying our determiner by repeating one example, and include one with a masculine pronoun as well, for the record:6

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6 The masculine example here could possibly be a an example of the preproprial article, since these have syncretised, but the fact that it occurs only with the second name, not the first, indicates that it is not purely an article (cf the criteria that will be presented below, especially that of obligatoriness).
(18) Direct object:
har du spurt hun Kirsten om det?
have you asked she Kirsten about it?
‘Have you asked that person Kirsten about it?’  (F,72,WO,L)

(19) Men når Andreas og jeg tar en tur blir han Kjell så forskrekkelig sur
but when Andreas and I take a trip becomes he Kjell so very sour
‘But when Andreas and I take a trip, that person Kjell becomes so sour.’

In the Norwegian Reference Grammar, Faarlund et al. (1997: 338) mention briefly that most Norwegian dialects use a preposed pronoun together with proper names. In the Toten dialect (described in Faarlund 2000), the preproprial article is obligatory before first names and family nouns such as father, mother, grandma etc. I also include an example of the masculine variety, from the Stavanger dialect, just for the record:

(20) Har du sett a Berit?
have you seen the Berit
‘Have you seen Berit?’ (Faarlund 2000: 51)

(21) Han Kjell hadde krangla me morå, så han sa: [...] the Kjell had argued with the-mother, so he said
‘Kjell had argued with his mother, so he said...’

The Reference Grammar says nothing directly about the Oslo dialect(s). Hence, we could make a first guess that our hun is an instance of the preproprial article. However, there are several reasons to think that this guess is wrong. First, the form of the pronoun is not the same. The unstressed version of the feminine pronoun used to be, and is for many Oslo-speakers, a (Larsen 1907: 112, Bull 1980: 53, 69), not hun. Second, the two pronouns are different w.r.t. stress. The preproprial article in Norwegian dialects is always unstressed. Our preposed pronouns as they appear in the NoTa corpus are all stressed (see also Fretheim and Amfo 2005 about this fact) (see (20) and (18) above for translations):

(22) Har du sett a BErit?

(23) Har du spurt HUN KIRSten om det?
This strongly indicates a different grammatical status for these two prenominal determiners. Third, the two determiners are different w.r.t. obligatoriness. The informants who use our preposed article with some names, also choose not to use it with other names. For example, the woman who uttered (i), also uttered (ii) in the same conversation (for translation of (24), see (18)):

(24) Har du spurt hun Kirsten om det? (F,72,WO,L)

(25) en gang Signe og jeg da ...
one time Signe and I then
'Once Signe and I, then...'

(26) Jeg var skolevenninne med hun piken der (F,72,WO,L)
I was school-friend with she the-girl there
'I was a school friend of that.'

(27) Han professoren nevnte "zoologi".
he the-professor mentioned zoology
'That professor mentioned zoology.'

While the preproprial article is obligatory in some dialects with first names, our prenominal article is never obligatory. But it should be mentioned that the preproprial unstressed articles have different status w.r.t. obligatoriness in different dialects. Faarlund (2000) says that they are obligatory in the Toten dialect, but it seems that in the Hamar and Stange dialects, they are not. Delsing (2003: 22-23) says that they seem to be obligatory in Swedish Norrland, but not in Västerbotten, in the latter case they can only be used when certain pragmatic conditions apply, as we shall see in section 5. However, our preposed pronouns are not obligatory, and are therefore clearly not inflectional articles, but are voluntarily added to obtain a certain effect. They are some kind of demonstratives with some meaning attached to them.

Fourth, unlike preproprial articles, our determiners can occur with other types of nominals. We have seen this earlier in section 3.3, and with one new example below, uttered by the same informant as (24). I include one example of the masculine variety, just for the record:

(26) Jeg var skolevenninne med hun piken der (F,72,WO,L)
I was school-friend with she the-girl there
'I was a school friend of that.'

(27) Han professoren nevnte "zoologi".
he the-professor mentioned zoology
'That professor mentioned zoology.'

5 The Semantics and Pragmatics of the Norwegian Demonstratives

We have seen that the preposed pronouns are not inflectional articles, but have some independent meaning that determines their occurrence with a nominal constituent. Being a native speaker of this dialect, I have been able to ask myself and discuss with fellow dialect speakers, and I have arrived at the following:
The preposed pronoun is used to invoke psychological distance to the person referred to by that noun. In other words, they have a deictic use, and can be coined: “psychologically distal demonstratives” (PDD for short). More detailed descriptions of its meaning and use will be given below.

While it is well-known that Norwegian has spatial demonstratives divided into distal and proximal ones (see Faarlund et al. 1997: §3.2.2), the forms of which are the same as the non-human definite articles den ‘that’ and denne ‘this’, this psychologically distal demonstrative has only recently been mentioned in the literature. Fretheim and Amfo (2005) discuss some intonational properties that distinguish the animate from the inanimate determiners, but they do not discuss any semantic or pragmatic differences between them. Julien (2005: §4.3) argues for the fact that they are demonstratives, but does not look at their meaning. Delsing (2003: 23) mentions our pronominal determiner in a footnote only. It will therefore be useful to look at the phenomenon of deixis and see how they fit in with different kinds described in the literature for other languages.

Spatial deixis is quite common among the languages of the world, but there are also other types of deixis. Levinson (1992) mentions both discourse deixis and social deixis, The first of these is not relevant here, as it concerns deixis that refers to entities already mentioned in the discourse. The second type, social deixis, on the other hand, seems more relevant.

Levinson (1992: 90) describes the social deixis as either relational or absolute, and the former one, which is the one interesting for our purposes, is further divided into four groups: (i) speaker and referent honorifics, (ii) speaker and addressee honorifics, (iii) speaker and bystander honorifics, (iv) speaker and setting. Out of these, clearly the first group seems most suitable for our deixis, but there are two factors with our psychologically distal demonstrative that do not fit into this group.

First, it is not the case that our demonstratives have anything to do with honorifics, even if this group by Levinson is assumed to extend over such qualities as kinship relations, totemic relations and clan membership. In a modern, egalitarian, social-democratic society such as Norway, everybody is in principle equal, and there are certainly no social differences that have a grammaticalised expression. Indeed, when Norway was less egalitarian, there

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7 One of the reviewers agrees that there is psychological distance when the PDD is used with only a first name, but thinks that used with both a first and a second name, there is less psychological distance. I do not get the latter effect at all, and neither do the (admittedly few) people I have asked. I leave open the possibility that this effect can occur, but would like to have it confirmed before I take it into account.
used to be a distinction between formal and informal forms of the second person singular pronoun, but this distinction is not known by the younger generations: 8

(28) Vet du /De hva klokka er?
know you (informal)/(formal) what the-clock is
‘Do you know what time it is?’

Second, the participants that are relevant or our demonstratives are none of the four groups listed by Levinson, but rather [[speaker and/or addressee] and referent]. In other words, the PDD can be used if either the speaker or the addressee or both have a relationship to the referent that the speaker wants to indicate as remote. Thus, the PDD can be used in a variety of contexts. Below, the speaker does not know – or wants to distance herself from — the mother of her friend:

(29) det var også en # en dame som ikke var god # hun moren til
there was also a – a woman who not was good – she the-mother to
venninnen min da
the-friend mine then
‘There was also a woman who wasn’t good, that mother of my
friend.’

The PDD can be used even about close relatives, underlining the fact that the PDD is indeed psychological, not social. Delsing (2003: 23) suggests that its core meaning in Swedish is exactly this: for the speaker to indicate uncertainty about the addressee’s knowledge of the referent. The sentence below could indicate that the speaker distances herself from her sister, but it may equally well be a case of the speaker knowing that the addressee does not know the sister, and so accomodates to the psychological relationship of the addressee to the referent. Indeed, since this is a posting on an open Internet forum, with an infinite audience, the latter interpretation is the most likely one:

(30) Men hun søsteren min er sånn som ser auraer og merker stemninger
but she the-sister mine is such who sees auras and feels
i hus.
atmospheres in houses
‘But my sister is the kind who sees auras and feels atmospheres in
houses.’

8 I am of course not claiming that lack of linguistic distinctions with necessity reflects lack of social distinctions, but the converse holds: It is impossible to keep linguistic distinctions for a missing social distinction.
The PDD can be further modified by the distal adverb \textit{der} ‘there’. The effect is not only one of psychological distance w.r.t. how well the speaker knows the referent, but is one of a somewhat negative attitude towards that person:

(31) \begin{exe}
\ex \text{i dag da }\textit{hun der} \textit{vikaren} \text{ kom} \\
\hspace{1em} \text{today when she there substitute-teacher came} \\
\hspace{1em} \text{‘Today, when that substitute teacher came...’} \quad (F,18,RO,L)
\end{exe}

We saw many examples of the PDD with proper names in sections 3.3 and 4 (one is repeated below). As with the other uses, the PDD indicates some distance by the speaker towards the referent. Actually, there is one thing that is interesting to note about this use of the PDD. In the Norwegian society, referring to somebody by both first name and surname would indicate that one did not know that person very well. It therefore calls for some kind of explanation that the PDD is used with proper names (especially if the surname is known by the speaker, as it often would be). The reason for this use is probably that the egalitarianism has gained more and more ground. A sentence such as that below would typically be used when the addressee knows the person referred to very well, but the speaker does not. If the speaker chose to use the surname to indicate his or her own lack of intimate knowledge of the referent, the situation would become very uneven between the speaker and the addressee. The use of the PDD makes it possible for both to refer to the referent by first name only, even though their relationship with that person is very different.

(32) \begin{exe}
\ex \text{Har du spurt }\textit{hun Kirsten} \text{ om det?} \\
\hspace{1em} \text{have you asked she Kirsten about it?} \\
\hspace{1em} \text{‘Have you asked this person Kirsten about it?’} \quad (F,72,WO,L)
\end{exe}

There are also examples of the PDD being used with ordinary noun phrases such as the one below. It is possible that the PDD indicates general, psychological distance between the speaker and the singer referred to – the hearer knows from this that the speaker does not know the singer. But here, the noun phrase contains so much presumably new information that it seems less likely that the speaker would need to indicate distance to the referent. Norwegian definite noun phrases containing an adjectival modifier generally need a pre-adjectival determiner. This is often the distal demonstrative, which is often called the “definite article of the adjective”. It is possible that it is the PDD that has taken on the role of being this article in examples such as the one below. It would still be true, though, that the PDD is psychologically distal in such cases, even though it would not be important to communicate this aspect since the rest of the noun phrase also indicates non-familiarity.
Finally, one might ask whether there is also a psychologically proximal demonstrative, given that there are both kinds in the spatial system. I have not found any in the Oslo dialect – the preproprial article could have been a candidate, but it seems to have more or less disappeared. There may be dialects that have both, though. In the town dialect of Hamar and the country dialect of Stange, both of the Hedmark county North of Oslo, both determiners seem to be present, and the same seems to be the case as far away as in the Sunnfjord dialect of Førde in West Norway. In the example in (34), from the Stange dialect, the preproprial *a* indicates familiarity with the referent, while the pronominal *hu* indicates the by now well-known psychological distance. Interestingly, these dialects seem to differ from theToten dialect mentioned above, in which the preproprial article is obligatory. Julien (2005: 124) reports that both varieties exist in the Solør dialect near the Swedish border, but does not characterise them semantically. Delsing (2003: 23) reports that the preproprial article is used in many dialects only with the names of people that the speaker knows well. However, he does not mention whether these dialects have the something like the PDD.

(34) Jæ såg a/hu Kirsten
    I saw her/she Kirsten
    ‘I saw our/that Kirsten.’

However, the parallelism is only partial, because there is no psychologically proximal article to be used with nouns and noun phrases other than proper names.

6 How old is the psychologically distal demonstrative?

One might be tempted to think that the PDD is new in Norwegian. This seems to be the opinion of Fretheim and Amfo (2005: 106): “[...] has become a popular alternative [...] in urban and rural dialects alike”. But it is actually possible to test this, to some degree, since there exists spoken language data from the early 1970s Oslo, the “TAUS” material (Hanssen: 1986). If it can be found there, it must be at least 30 years old. And indeed, there are many examples of the PDD from that time:
(35) jæ vill ikke akkrat vekke hun vennindn min
I will not exactly wake she the-friend mine
‘I don’t want to exactly wake up my friend’ (TAUS: F,21,EO,H)

(36) da hadde hu dama kåmmet løpne ut etter å vært så læi sæ får å ha
tatt træddve krone få mye få kjoln #
then had she woman come running out after to have been so sad
herself for to have taken thirty crowns too much for the-dress
‘Then that woman had come running out after having been so sad
that she had taken thirty crowns too much for the dress.’
(TAUS: F,20,EO,H)

Dyvik (1979: 73) mentions the use of han ‘he’ as an alternative to den (the
spatial distal demonstrative) in some example sentences, but does not discuss the
difference between them (the focus of his discussion at this point is the adverb
der ‘there’):

(37) Lykkelig er han/den der(re) mannen som får deg til kone
happy is he/that there the-man who get you as wife
‘The man who get you as a wife will be happy.’ (Dyvik 1979:
(67b))

(38) Han var blitt han/den der(re) fine mannen
he was become he/that there fine man
‘He had become an incredible fine man.’ (Dyvik 1979: (67d))

Lødrup (1982: 55) also mentions the pronouns han ‘he’ and hun ‘she’ as
determiners, and compares them with the distal demonstrative den ‘that’. He
does not discuss them from our perspective, but instead discusses their ability to
have specific or non-specific reference (only han/hun apparently can have the
former).

We can conclude that the PDD is not brand new, since it occurs several
times in the (relatively small) material of spoken Oslo dialect from the 1970s. Going
further back into history is difficult, since it is very much a feature of
spoken language, and we have no older spoken language data. Looking in
written sources is futile. The PDD is non-existent even in the Oslo Corpus of
Tagged, Norwegian Texts, and in the Bokmål Lexicography Corpus, both of
which contain a substantial number of novels that have dialogues that at least to
some extent would attempt to replicate spoken language. However, we can call
it “new”, given the missing descriptions in the existing grammatical literature.
7 Conclusion

In the title and the introduction, we asked the question whether just any pronoun can be used anywhere, i.e. whether the speaker has a free choice. We saw that this is not the case. While the nominative feminine pronoun *hun* ‘she’ can occur in a variety of positions and functions, the accusative *henne* ‘her’ is much more limited.

However, during the investigation we discovered a demonstrative that has not been described previously in the literature. This demonstrative means that the system of deixis in the Oslo dialect, possibly in all Norwegian dialects, is more complicated than has been previously known. In addition to spatial deixis, there is also psychological deixis, which is grammatically encoded.

References

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Janne Bondi Johannessen

The NoTa Speech Corpus
http://omilia.uio.no/nota
The TAUS Speech Corpus
http://omilia.uio.no/taus