CHAPTER SEVEN

DETERMINATION, SPECIFICATION:
DEMONSTRATIVE PARTICLES

Certain particles suffixed to a substantive may serve to mark it as something set apart. These particles have traditionally been treated as dependent forms of the demonstrative pronoun.

See Falkenstein 1949, 55 f.; 1959, 34; Thomsen 1984, 80–82; Attinger 1993, 175 f. As with possession (see 5.2) we prefer to separate “pronouns” as independent words from particles attached to a noun. In the case of determination or specification there is another reason to keep demonstrative pronouns and demonstrative particles separated. Whereas free ne(n) “this” only occurs as non-person class, dependent -ne(n) may refer to substantives of both the person and non-person classes.

There are five particles to be discussed: -ne(n), -bi, -e, -ri, and -še. The evidence for some of these is not uncontroversial, partly because of orthographical ambiguity or scarcity of references.

7.1. -ne(n)

-ne(n): u₄-ne-na “on this very day” Gudea Stat. B ix 7.

Note: For this passage Falkenstein 1949, 55 fn. 8, had a translation “an diesem seinen Tag”, combining a demonstrative and a possessive particle. Thomsen 1984, 80, has “on this day”.

-u₄-ne māš-ğī₅₆-ka “on that day, in a night time vision” Gudea Cyl. A i 17.

Note: Pace Edzard 1997, 69, who reads u₄-dē. A sequence directive [e] and locative [a] for describing the time of the day would, however, be quite unusual. u₄-ne is virtually in the locative, too, but the case particle [a] is only noted at the end of the string.

lū-ne is so far only attested in lexical context: lū-ne-da = itti annîm “with this one” OBG T I 307 (MSL 4, 48); ki-lū-ne(-k)-ta = itti annîm ibid. 308, and see lines 309–341.

Note: It is hard for modern grammarians to judge whether these examples should be considered—at least partly—as a learned exercise or as a reflex of late OB spoken Sumerian. Already ibid. lines 309 f. lū-ne-da-me-eš, lū-ne-me-eš-da = itti annûtim raise our suspicion, because the pl. of the copula, me-eš “they are", is
mechanically inserted to express nominal, not verbal, plurality. On the other hand, most of the sg. examples meet the standards we are setting for “our” Sumerian grammar.

7.2. -bi

-bi is most probably identical with the possessive particle of the 3rd sg. non-person class, and one easily sees a transition in meaning from “its, relating to something” to “that”, “the aforementioned”. u₄-bi-a “(in its day =) at that time”, sometimes referring to primordial days.

u₄-bi-a already in Ukg. 4 ii 4 = 5 ii 5. The distribution of u₄-bi-a and u₄-ba (cf. 5.2) is not yet clear. Was the [i] of demonstrative [bi] not overridden by the locative case particle [a] as was the [i] of possessive [bi]? In that case one would, perhaps, have to distinguish between [biH] and [bi].

7.3. -e (?)

It is difficult to establish the separate existence of a demonstrative particle [e], since it would be identical in spelling with the ergative and directive case particles.

Gudea Stat. B vii 49–53 is often quoted: alan-e u kù-nu za-gin nu-ga-âm [nu-(i)nga-am] u erida-nu u nagga-nu sipar-nu kiği-gá lu nu-ba-ğá-ğá “for the/this statue nobody was supposed to apply in work silver or lapis lazuli, or copper or tin or bronze”. Here, it is not clear at all whether alan-e is “statue + demonstrative particle” or simply the directive case (“to apply in work material to the statue”).

-e is attested in lexical context: lú-e-ra, lú-e-me-eš-a OBGT I 326 f. (MSL 4, 49).

For the second form, cf. the note at the end of 7.1.

Woods 2003, sees the demonstrative -e as the origin of the ergative case particle. See also Yoshikawa, end of 7.4.

7.4. -ri (?)

With -ri it is uncertain whether it should be considered a demonstrative or an adjective meaning “far away, remote”; cf. CAD N/2, 186