JAPANESE CASE MARKER *DE* IN COPULAR SENTENCES: ESSIVE OR LOCATIVE?

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Abstract

In this paper I will discuss two constructions of the Japanese verb *aru* 'be'. In one construction, *aru* occurs with a copular complement marked by the particle *de*, obtaining a sentence-ending pattern known as N-*dearu*. In the other construction, *aru* expresses the happening of a dynamic event and may occur with a *de*-marked locative adjunct encoding the physical place of the event. By analyzing these two constructions I will single out a 'predicative' function of the case marker *de*, and show that when functioning as a support item in nominal predications and in other copular sentences, *aru* retains its original nature as a locational verb and consequently assigns a locative-like grammatical case (marked with *de*) to the second argument of its clause. In this instance of strong localism, a grammatical split of the locative marker *de* happens so that *de* ends up marking a number of different surface cases. In the conclusion I will propose that the particle *de* in predicative function should be acknowledged to be an 'Essive' case marker.

Key words: Japanese, Case marking, Locative, Essive, copula.

Abbreviations

ACC	Accusative
AND	adnominal
COMP	complementizer
CONT	contrast
COP	copula
GEN	Genitive
NEG	negative
NOM	Nominative
NOMIN	nominalizer

POL   polite

PROG   progressive

TOP   topic

VOL   volitive

1. Introduction

In this paper I will analyze the Japanese sentence pattern:

(1)   *Bun-wa   oto-no   renzoku-**de**   **aru**.*

sentence-TOP   sound-GEN   sequence-*de*   **be**

'A sentence is a sequence of sounds.'

in which the *verb aru* behaves as a copular verb 'be' and the particle *de* marks the predicative argument. The sentence-ending pattern so obtained is commonly known as N-*dearu*. But the particle *de* is also used to encode the Locative:

(2)   *Siken-wa   ikkai-no   kyoositu-**de**   **aru**.*

exam-TOP 1st_floor-GEN   classroom-*de*   **be**

'The exam is in a 1st floor classroom.'

so that, by comparing and distinguishing these two functions of *de*, I will argue here that the former, 'predicative'*de*, should be considered to be an Essive surface casemarker. To do so, I will introduce the verb *aru* and the constructions in which *aru* and the particle *de* co-occur, then I will introduce and briefly discuss the several functions of *de*, and lastly I will draw my conclusions.

The Japanese language

The Japanese language has a SV/AOV syntax; with verbs inflecting for politeness, negative, tense, aspect and mood by means of suffixed morphemes (mostly left unglossed in the present paper). Grammatical functions are expressed by postpositional case markers (I will also leave *de* unglossed). The nominative marker *ga* is often replaced by the topic marker *wa*, with the shift of the subject to sentence-first position. Sentences with no subject are interpreted as impersonal or as having a 1st person subject.

2. The verb *aru* and the 'copula' *da*

Aru is a lexical verb with no voice, irregular negative inflection and irregular potential form – just as many 'be' verbs across the world. It can head three types of sentences.

First, as the support verb in locational sentences (locative constructions with inanimate subjects, in both a locative proper and an existential reading;whole-part constructions and possessive sentences. Muromatsu, 1997; Iida, 2007; Creissels, 2014b), *aru* assigns dative case to its locational complement. These dative constructions will not be discussed here.

Second, *aru* may predicate the occurrence of a dynamic eventuality, admitting a *de-*locative phrase to express the physical location of the event. As such, it can be replaced by a verb like *okoru* 'happen':

(3)   *Kazi-wa   koko-**de**   {**atta**/okotta}.*

        fire-TOP   this_place-***de***   {**was**/happened}

        'The firewas here.'

(4)   *Koko-**de**   kazi-ga   {**atta**/okotta}.*

        this_place-***de***   fire-TOP   {**was**/happened}

        'There was a fire here.'

A topicalized subject must occur in sentence-first position. In (3), then, the word order is rigid, the *de*-phrase is rhematic and cannot be omitted. Otherwise, short-, medium- and long-distance scrambling is relatively free in Japanese. One simple instance of it is shown in (4).

Third, *aru* supports nominal and nominal-adjectival predications, like (1) and (5)-(6), and all other non-locational copular sentences (identificational, equational, specificational sentences, as classified in Mikkelsen, 2011 after Higgins, 1979), like the identificational (7):

(5)   *Wagahai-wa   neko-**de**   **aru**.*

        I-TOP   cat-***de***   **be**

        'I am a cat.'

(6)   *Yoru-ga   sizuka-**de**   **aru**.*

        night-NOM   quiet-***de***   **be**

        'The nights are quiet.'

(7)   *Zibun-wa   Onoda-**de** **ari**-masu.*

        self-TOP   Onoda-***de*** **be-**POL

        'Name's Onoda, sir.'

Here again *aru* behaves as a two-place verb assigning a locative-like *de* case to its second argument. Unlike the eventive construction above, in these copular sentences *aru* cannot be replaced by another verb (but see (22)-(23) below) and the NP-*de* element must always be the phrase in the closest proximity to the verb:

(8)   **Neko-**de** wagahai-ga **aru**.*

cat-**de**   I-NOM   **be**

On this basis, the dominant approach to Japanese copularization (Bloch, 1946; Makino 1968; Wenk, 1973; Mills 1977; Narahara, 2002; also Pustet, 2005; Stassen, 1997) considers *de* and *aru* to form the "uncontracted" variant-*dearu* of the copula *da*, bound to the preceding nominal:

(9)   *Wagahai-wa   neko-**da**.*

I-TOP   cat-**COP**

'I'm a cat.'

Da is part of a complex paradigm of forms which I will gloss COPthroughout this paper (despite my discontent with the traditional approach). *Dearu*, the supposedly "uncontracted" form of *da*, occurs for markedness only, namely in writing, occasionally in formal speech, in the negative as in (10), and for the insertion of focus markers as in (11):

(10)   *Inu-**de**   **nai**   wagahai-wa…*

dog-**de**   **be.**NEG   I-TOP

'I, who am not a dog,…'

(11)   *Yoru-ga   sizuka-**de**-mo   **aru**.*

night-NOM   quiet-**de-**'even'   **be**

'The nights are even quiet.'

Under the dominant approach, the predicative function of *de* is dismissed as uninteresting and irrelevant (cf. Teramura, 1982: 171), and not considered in valence dictionaries (such as the *Nihongo kihondoosiyoohooziten*, 1989).

However, an alternate, "minority" approach also exists (based on Tokieda, 1950; adopted by and summarized in Nishiyama, 1999; see also Daniels, 1973: 267; Sawada, 2008), which analyzes -*dearu* as being composed by

•a verbal element *aru* defined as the 'semantically vacuous' or *Dummy* copula; plus

•the morpheme *de*, defined as the 'semantically contentful' or *Predicative* copula(Nishiyama, 1999: 187-188).

Still, the grammatical nature or the meaning of the morpheme *de* is not discussed. Here I am going to take this analysis several steps further and deal directly with *de*.

3. The marker *de*

On the basis of the broad taxonomic criteria outlined by Narrog (2009) and of the current classification of *de* (based on Iori, 2000; Iwasaki, 1995; Martin 1975; Makino and Tsutsui, 1986; Morioka and Takubo, 1987; Narita, 1993; Nishiyama, 1998; Nitta, 1982; Sugai, 1997; Teramura, 1982), I distinguish three typical usages of this particle. In one function, *de* is the marker of the Instrumental case. This and other instrument-related functions will be not discussed here. Another function of *de* is that of marking the Locative, as mentioned above. Examples of Locative-*de* are (3)-(4) above,(24) and (27) below, and the following:

(12) *Pāti-wa   shokudoo-de   yaru.*

party-TOP cafeteria-***de***   do

'We'll have the party in the cafeteria.'

In the spatial domain, *de* encodes the physical place where the subject is located during the whole event (Sugai, 1997). *De* implies continuity in the temporal domain as well, strongly suggesting that some relevant process took place until the moment specified by the temporal adjunct. (Iwasaki, 1995):

(13) *Gakkai-wa   asita-**de**   owaru.*

conference-top   tomorrow-***de***   finish

'The conference will end tomorrow.'

More abstractly, *de* can also express manner:

(14) *Moo_supiido-**de**   hasiru.*

crazy_speed-***de***   run

'Running at a breakneck speed'.

so that, in their quest for the single underlying meaning of each particle, driven by a principle of iconicity, Japanese scholars have concluded that *de* encodes the general background of the event in all of its uses (see for instance Sugai, 1997).

This connects with the third main function of *de*, that of encoding non-referential roles and functions:

(15) *Kodomo-wa   hadasi-**de**   {hasiru/**aru**}.*

child-TOP   bare_feet-***de***   {run/**are**}

'The children {run/**are**}barefooted.'

In (15), with the action verb *hasiru* 'run', the *de*-phrase encodes a subject-oriented depictive. However, as shown, with copular verb *aru* that same *de*-phrase realizes the predicative argument. This also happens with object-oriented depictives:

(16)   *Ken-ga*   *sakana-o*   *nama-de*   *taberu.*
       Ken-NOM   fish-ACC   uncooked_condition-*de*   eat
       'Ken eats his fish raw.'

(17)   *Ken-no*   *sakana-wa*   *nama-de*   **aru**.
       Ken-GEN   fish-TOP   uncooked_condition-*de*   **be**
       'Ken's fish is raw.'

In (16), the marker *de* cannot be replaced with any other particle or expression with similar functions (the polite gerundive *-desite* of the 'dummy copula', functive *-tosite*). The same obviously holds for (17), where *de* marks the predicative argument.

Marker *de* may also express the functive, a type of depictive defined as «the expression of the [temporary] role or function in which a participant appears» (Creissels, 2014: 607):

(18)   *Kono*   *ningyoo-o*   *gakkoo-no*   *syukudai-de*   *tukutta.*
       this   doll-ACC   school-GEN   homework-*de*   made
       'I made this doll **as** an assignment from school.'

(19)   *Kono*   *ningyoo-wa*   *gakkoo-no*   *syukudai-de*   **atta**.
       this   doll-TOP   school-GEN   homework-*de*   **was**
       'This doll was an assignment from school.'

In (18), the *de*-phrase encodes an object-controlled functive, and again can double as a predicative argument, as in (19). More problematic is the encoding with *de* of a subject-controlled functive:

(20)   ??*Isya-de*   *hatarak-oo-to*   *omou-no-desu*   *ga,…*
       doctor-*de*   work-VOL-COMP   think-NOMIN-COP.POL   but
       'I think I'm going to work as a physician, but…'
       (http://detail.chiebukuro.yahoo.co.jp/qa/question_detail/q1077822085)

The *de*-phrase in (20) (which can also occur in *isya-de aru* 'I am a doctor') is not accepted by my informants. Particle *-tosite* should be used instead. However, several tokens of similar *de*-phrases are retrievable from the Internet, and this might be proof of a new trend in the Japanese language.

The following *de*-phrases are not functives, as they do not encode a temporary 'role', yet they express temporary conditions and can be considered to be depictives:

(21) {*Hitori/kazoku/minna*}-***de***   *kita.*

{one_person/family/everybody}-***de***   came

'I camealone / with my family / we came all together.'

With a proper subject, all *de*-phrases as in (21) can realize predicative arguments (as in {*hitori/kazoku/minna*}-***deatta***).

(22) *Titi-wa*   *katyoo-**de***   {*owatta*/***atta***}.

my_father-TOP   section_chief-***de***   {ended/**was**}

'My father {ended as /**was**} a chief of a section.'

(23) *Imooto-wa*   *dokusin-**de***   {*toosita*/***atta***}.

younger_sister-TOP single-***de***   {passed/**was**}

'My sister {remained/**was**} single.'

In (22)-(23) the *de*-phrases cannot be omitted, must occur immediately before the verb, and are therefore predicative arguments. Indeed, verbs *owaru* 'end' and *toosu* 'pass' can be replaced by *aru*, the only difference being aspectual.

Lastly, *de* realizes the copular complement, as in the identificational sentence (7) above.

4. The behavior of *de*

As shown in (24), several *de*-phrases may co-occur, provided they do not encode the same function. For instance, sentences with two locative or subject-oriented depictive *de*-phrases as (25)-(26) are ungrammatical:

(24) *Daidokoro-**de** hadaka-**de***   *sakana-o te-**de***   *nama-**de***

      tabeta.

kitchen-***de***   naked_body-***de*** fish-ACC   hand-***de***   uncooked_condition-***de***

ate

LOCATIVE   S-DEPICTIVE   INSTRUMENTAL O-DEPICTIVE

'I atemy fish raw, with my hands, naked in the kitchen.'

(25) **Niwa-**de** taiikukan-**de** kodomo-ga   asondeiru.*

garden-***de*** gym-***de***   children-NOM play:PROG

'There are children playing in the garden in the gym.'

(26) **Hadasi-**de***   *syatu-nasi-**de***   *hasiru.*

bare_feet-***de***   shirt-without-***de***   run

'Running barefooted shirtless.'

This proves that when the particle *de* is used in the locative, instrumental or depictive function, it actually marks distinct surface cases.The co-occurrence of a subject- and of an object-oriented depictive as in (24)is due to the fact that, as secondary predications, depictives are linked to different arguments in deep structure.

Actually, however, two (or more) case markers in the same function can co-occur under certain markedness conditions:

(27)   *Niwa-**de**-demo   taiikukan-**de**-demo doko-**de**-demo kodomo-ga   asondeiru.*
        garden-*de*-'even' gym-*de*-'even'   where-*de*-'even' children-NOM   play:PROG
        'There are children playing everywhere, even in the garden and even in the gym.'

(28)   *Hadasi-**de**-demo   syatu-nasi-**de**-demo   hasiru.*
        bare_feet-*de*-'even' shirt-without-*de*-'even' run
        'Running barefooted, shirtless even.'

Demo in (27)-(28) is one of several 'pragmatic' focus particles which can be encliticized to any oblique case marker (except for genitive *no*). As mentioned above and shown in (11), some of these particles (*sae/saemo* 'even', *mo* 'too', *sika* 'anything but', contrastive *wa*) can even occur between a *de*-phrase and *aru*:

(29)   *Zibun-ga tukutta syoosetu-**de**-wa   **ari**-masu ga...*
        self-NOM   made   novel-*de*-CONT   **be**-POL   but
        'It's just a novel I wrote…'

(30)   S.J.*Guurudo-wa   rippa-na   sakka-**de**-sae   **atta.***
        S.J.Gould-TOP   wonderful-COP.ADN   writer-*de*-'even' **was**
        'S.J.Gould was even a wonderful writer.'

No infixation mechanism exists in Japanese, so that the insertion of light morphemic material between *de* and the verb obtains from anordinary encliticization of the focus marker. Therefore, *dearu* is not a single 'copula', and *de* behaves like any other oblique case marker.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

From the above treatment of N-*de aru* sentences I can conclude that *aru* is a 'be' verb which has no meaning, performs linking and feature carrying functions, and corresponds to the notion of a copula as a dummy element. In so doing, however, *aru* retains its original nature as a locational verb and consequently assigns a locative-like grammatical case (marked with *de*) to the second argument of its clause. Thus, *aru* encodes the condition, state or class in which entities are located as if they were located in physical space, and this both in matrix clauses and in secondary predications. Such a behavior of *aru* can be seen as a strong

example of localism, and may be considered an instance of locational takeover of the nominal encoding (after Stassen 1997: 57). On the other hand, the co-occurrence of locative, 'predicative' and instrumental *de*-phrases shows that *de* is actually split into a number of different surface case markers, or, in other words, that the Locative *de* neutralizes several grammatical functions.

One is the predicative function, in which *de* shows the same behavior as all other oblique case markers. The few syntactical constraints a predicative *de*-phrase is subjected to are caused by its relation to the verb, not by a peculiar nature of the marker *de* itself.

The need then arises for a specific label to be applied to the case marker *de* in apredicative function. This case marker cannot obviously be labeled 'Locative'.

I am not inclined to propose the label 'Predicative', though, because the locative coda of existential sentences is also considered a predicate but its oblique case is referred to as 'Locative' rather than 'Predicative'.

My choice falls on the term 'Essive'. First, *de* has several features in common with the Essive case in Uralic (and in Caucasian: Creissels, 2010) languages. Whereas the Uralic Essive denotes a temporary state of being and only occurs in secondary predications (features not shared by *de*), it is probably of spatial origin, is used in both the spatial and temporal domains, and is often interpreted as manner (deGroot, 2010), not unlike the Japanese *de*. Second, *de* has instrumental functions, and this is analogous with the predicative function of the Russian Instrumental case, which is also is defined 'essive'. Third, to my knowledge, the term 'essive' is used to refer to the functions of *de* in at least two sources, Martin (1975: 42) and Narrog (2009: 594), albeit for unstated reasons.

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