Studying Japanese Distal Demonstrative 'are' Using Video Corpus

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Abstract

We examine a test version of the Corpus of Everyday Japanese Conversation (CEJC), currently being built at the National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics in Tokyo (NINJAL), Japan. By focusing on non-verbal behaviors, we highlight the multimodal nature of the use of the Japanese distal demonstrative *are*. In particular, video data allows us to observe a previously unrecognized type of *are* where the speaker uses *are* while gazing towards and pointing fingers at the cell phone placed near her in order to refer to the photographs digitally stored on it. This use is not anaphoric, as its referent is newly introduced in the conversation through the combined use of *are* and the speaker's non-verbal behaviors. It is not spatial either, as that would have resulted in the employment of the proximal demonstrative *kore* and because the potential referent is not visible on the screen at the time of speech. Instead, it is used to indirectly refer to the digital data stored in the cell phone. Due to a shared understanding that cell phones digitally store photographs, the speaker's use of *are* along with simply gesturing at the cell phone makes such a reference possible.

Keywords: Japanese distal demonstrative *are*, non-verbal behavior, multimodality, everyday conversation, video, Japanese

1.   Introduction

Japanese is known for its three-way demonstrative system where the *ko*-series is said to refer to an object close to the speaker, the *so*-series to the addresee, and the *a*-series far in space from both the speaker and the addresee (Kuno 1973; Martin 1975; Iwasaki 2013; Hasegawa 2015). Among the *a-series*, *are* 'that' has long been discussed with regard to its spatial and anaphoric use both in linguistics and language teaching (Kuno 1973; Martin 1975; articles in Kinsui and Takubo 1992; Iwasaki 2013; Banno et al. 2011; Hatasa et al. 2011; Tohsaku 2006). In terms of spatial use, for example, *are* is introduced in Banno et al. (2011) with a picture of a woman talking to a man. She points to a pen, which is held by another person far from both her (the speaker) and the addressee, and says:

(1)   **are** wa   watashi no   pen desu
        that TOP I   GEN pen COP
        '**That** is my pen.'

(Banno et al. 2011: 62)

This type of *are* is used when the referent is physically available and possibly visible to both the speaker and the addressee.

From the perspective of anaphoric use, a referent is first introduced in the discourse and the demonstrative *are* subsequently refers back to it. In the following example constructed by Kuno (1973), A is talking about a fire which s/he saw the other day:

(2)
1 A: watashi mo choodo Harvard Square no
        I   also exactly Harvard Square   GEN
2   soba ni ite
        near in COP
        'I also happened to be in the Harvard Square area and'
3 ┌►[sono kaji] o   mimashita.
        that fire ACC saw
        'saw **that fire**.'
4 └─ [are] wa   hidoi   kaji deshita   ne.
        that TOP terrible fire COP.PAST PTCL
        '**That** was a terrible fire, wasn't it?' (Kuno 1973)

A says to the addressee *watashi mo choodo Harvard Square no soba ni ite **sono kaji** o mimashita* 'I also happened to be in the Harvard Square area and saw that fire' in lines 1-3. Then s/he comments on it in line 4, saying ***are** wa hidoi kaji deshita ne* 'That was a terrible fire, wasn't it?' This *are* 'that' refers to *sono kaji* 'that fire' in line 3. Although the uses of *are* have been discussed quite extensively, most of the research is based on constructed sentences like (1) and (2) above.

More recently, however, the availability of and interest in language use data have allowed researchers to uncover previously unidentified functions of this demonstrative (Hayashi 2004; Daiju 2017, etc.). For example, Hayashi (2004), based on the examination of audio recorded conversation, highlights its cataphoric use where he suggests that *are* can serve as a 'dummy' to project a subsequent specification. In the example below, A is talking about gas pipes:[1]

(3)
1 A: sono= saikin [are] na   n   desu yo.
        uh   recently that COP NOL COP PTCL
        'Uh, recently (it)'s been **that**.'
2   ano=, gasu kan aru   ja   nai desu ka=.
        uhm gas pipe exsist COP not COP PTCL
        'Uhm, you know there are gas pipes, right?'
3   [are zenbu ima purasuchikku ni naritsutsu   aru]
        that all   now plastic   to is becoming exist
4   n   desu yo=.
        NOL COP PTCL
        '**They've all been changing to plastic pipes now**.'

(Hayashi 2004)

In line 1, A begins by saying *sono= saikin **are** na n desu yo* 'uh, recently (it)'s been **that**'. Then A introduces gas pipes in line 2 by saying *ano=, gasu kan aru ja nai desu*

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[1] In the examples used in this paper, an equal sign (=) indicates lengthning, an at sign (@) laughter, and square brackets ([ ]) overlapped speech.

ka= 'uhm, you know there are gas pipes, right?' Then in lines 3-4, he continues *are zenbu ima purasuchikku ni naritsutsu aru n desu yo=* 'they've all been changing to plastic now'. According to Hayashi (2004), the phrase in line 1 ***are** na n desu yo* '(it)'s been **that**' projects the subsequent specification of *are*. That is, the addressee is "instructed" that its specification is coming. In line 3, the speaker says *are zenbu ima purasuchikku ni naritsutsu aru* 'they've all been changing to plastic pipes now' to specify the *are* from line 1. Please note that *are* in line 3 is anaphoric; it refers back to *gasu kan* 'gas pipes' in line 2.

We have broadened the study of the demonstrative *are* by examining video-recorded everyday speech data, which has become more available in recent years with the advancement of digital technology. Specifically, we used the test version of the Corpus of Everyday Japanese Conversation (CEJC), currently being built at the National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics (NINJAL) in Tokyo, Japan.

It should be noted that studies of languages other than Japanese have examined demonstratives in actual use. The pioneering work by researchers such as Auer (1984), Hanks (1992, 2005), Himmelmann (1996), Enfield (2002, 2003), and Sidnell and Enfield (2017), with a focus on non-verbal aspects in more recent studies, are particularly noteworthy. We hope to contribute to this ongoing discussion by adding Japanese audio and video data from CEJC, which just became available.

2. Analysis

Our examination of the use of *are* in CEJC has resulted in a number of striking examples which give insight into the situated nature of its actual use, mainly because the video portion of the corpus provides access to non-verbal aspects of everyday speech. We will give a preliminary observation of some of these examples in this section.

One example involves a husband who, while making a drink, says ***are** nai no* 'Don't (we) have **that**?'. The wife immediately responds with *n* 'huh?', which he quickly follows with the right index finger in stirring motion.

Figure 1: The husband is making a stirring motion with his right index finger.

This was apparently successfully communicated as the wife then says *a kakimawasu no aru* 'Oh (we) have (a)

stirring one'. That is, the referent negotiation of *are* in this example can be only understood by taking a multimodal perspective which CEJC allows.

Another example, also taken from a drinking situation, again highlights the multimodal construction of the referent of *are*. In bringing out a bamboo-made cup to serve sake (Japanese alcohol beverage) to the guest, the speaker says *demo ne chotto **are** na n da yo ushiro ga* 'But (it) is a little bit **that**, the bottom (is a little bit **that**)' while showing the bottom of the cup to her.

Figure 2: The host is showing the bottom of the bamboo-made cup to the guest.

The guest has no trouble understanding what ***are*** '**that**' refers to and immediately says *aa ii yo betsuni zenzen* 'Oh, fine. No problem at all'. The exact referent of *are* was not verbalized throughout the conversation, but *are* along with the showing of the bottom of the can seems to have create a mutual understanding between the speakers, perhaps aided by the common knowledge that products made out of natural resources like bamboo are sometimes deformed or might even be damaged.

The rest of the paper focuses on one particular example which highlights a more intricate connection between *are* and non-verbal behaviors in the specification of the intended referent where the role played by knowledge shared by the speakers appears to be even more critical. In the interaction the segment below is taken from, M is talking about the new cabinet where she placed her printer:[2]

(4)
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1 M: dakara= maa purintaa wa   oite atte=
        so     um  priter  TOP put exist:and
        'So um (the) printer is put (on the cabinet), and'
2       purintaa wa   tsukatteru wa[ke].
        printer  TOP use:exist PTCL
        '(I) am using (the) printer.'
3 A:                          [a=].
                              oh
                              'Oh.'

4 M: ano=
5 A: yoku [ne]?
        often PTCL
        'often, right?'
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6 M: [**are**] ni ne.   <gazing towards and pointing
             that in PTCL   her fingers at her cell phone>
             'for **that**, right?'
7   soo.
       yes
       'Yes.'
8   shashin   toka <@ insatsu @> suru kara sa.
       photograph etc.   print   do beause PTCL
       'because (I) print photos etc.'

(CEJC: K001-004; 13 min)

In lines 1-2, M says 'So um (the) printer is put (on the cabinet), and (I) am using (the) printer.' After A's contribution 'Oh, (you are using the printer) often, right?' in lines 3 and 5, M produces *are ni ne* 'for **that**, right?' in line 6. This is a type of 'increment' (Couper-Kuhlen and Ono 2007) in that it can be understood to combine with the utterance in line 2 and results in a syntactically well-formed string [*are ni ne*] *purintaa wa tsukatteru wake* '(I) am using (the) printer [for **that**, right?]'. Notice that due to the word order of Japanese, this would take the form of insertion, placing *are ni ne* 'for **that**, right?' at the beginning. This increment shifts the original understanding '(I) am using (the) printer.' in line 2 to a new understanding '(I) am using (the) printer for that, right?'

The demonstrative *are* apparently refers to the printing of photographs as can be seen M's utterance 'because (I) print photos etc.' in line 8. Without video, one might suggest that *are* in line 6 is another example of cataphoric *are* which projects the specification of its referent in the upcoming interaction, in fact accomplished with *shashin* 'photos' in line 8 (Hayashi 2004). An examination of the video recording of the segment, however, reveals a more intricate process in identifying the referent of *are*. Intriguingly, as M produces *are ni ne* 'for that, right?' in line 6, she gazes towards and points her fingers at her cell phone as shown in figure 1. This is not a spatial use of the demonstrative; due to the proximity between M and her cell phone, the spatial use would have resulted in the employment of the proximal demonstrative *kore*. Equally importantly, we see a blank screen on her cell phone; there is no photograph which M is pointing towards.

Figure 3 : M is gazing towards and pointing her fingers at the cell phone.

What seems to be happening, instead, is that M is relying on a shared understanding among current Japanese speakers that cell phones digitally store photographs. This understanding allows M to make reference to photographs just by gazing towards and pointing her fingers at the cell phone. If the listener were to only consider the speaker's actions from the spatial perspective, they may incorrectly interpret these non-verbal behaviors as referring to the cell phone instead of the photographs. However, *are* in line 6 is not used spatially. Instead, our shared knowledge of how cell phones work makes it possible for the listener to understand that *are* here refers to the digital data present within the machine, which is cataphorically made more explicit in line 8.

3.   Conclusion

Overall, the current study underscores the importance of the study of linguistic form in actual use. In particular, video recordings allow researchers to examine the non-verbal aspects of how people interact as they produce language. The increasing availability of video data accomplished by video corpora such as CEJC by NINJAL gives a critical edge to our efforts to understand how language is actually used and what language itself is.

5.   References

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