Stance Taking in Japanese Newspaper Discourse: The Use and Non-Use of Copulas da and dearu

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Abstract: The present study aims to demonstrate how writers display their stances in information-oriented written discourse. In particular, the paper analyzes nominal sentences in three newspaper subgenres, and explicates how the Japanese copulas da and dearu, which are normally considered stylistic variants in written language, are used by journalists as important grammatical resources for expressing their epistemic and evaluative stances toward certain types of information conveyed in nominal sentences. Da in newspaper discourse is used as a marker of the writer’s commitment to the relevance of the information in the given discourse context. Dearu, on the other hand, marks the writer’s own interpretive and evaluative stance. In addition, the non-use of a copula (i.e., a bare nominal) also conveys a certain stance of the writer, namely that the information presented is taken to be factual. The specific kind of stance expressed through the use and non-use of these copula types is closely linked to the functional objectives and concerns of the particular genres.

Keywords: Japanese copulas, genre, style, newspaper discourse, information, stance marking

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1 Introduction

Stance taking is often associated with interactional discourse, where two or more participants spontaneously exchange their opinions, attitudes, feelings, or commitments concerning a proposition (Biber and Finegan 1989: 92). In
contrast, formal written texts such as newspaper discourse are generally considered stance-less, as they tend to be more objective and seem to suppress subjective expressions. However, if we take the view that the expression of stance is an essential feature of language (Thompson and Hunston 2000: 2) and every utterance encodes the speaker’s (or writer’s) point of view (Stubbs 1986: 1), planned written discourse deserves the same analytical attention as spontaneous conversation. Following this perspective, the present study investigates the expression of stance in Japanese newspaper discourse. It will become evident that stance marking is a pervasive phenomenon in newspaper discourse, one which confirms the fundamental nature of stance taking in a wide range of linguistic communication.

The present paper focuses on the copulas \textit{da} and \textit{dearu}, used at the sentence-final position, and demonstrates that the use and non-use of these copulas are not only determined by grammatical or stylistic conventions, but are also motivated by the writer’s concern about communicating his/her subjective stance toward certain types of information conveyed in the propositions. In written language, the use of \textit{da} or \textit{dearu} and the omission of a copula (i.e., the zero copula or bare nominal) are usually considered simple alternatives in presenting nominal sentences (Hinds 1986; Uehara 2003: 383–384). Observe the following sentences with variations at the sentence-final positions.

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{kore wa pen }\{da/dearu/Ø\}.
\begin{itemize}
\item this TOP pen
\end{itemize}
‘This is a pen \{da/dearu/Ø\}.’

\item \textit{John wa gakusei }\{da/dearu/Ø\}.
\begin{itemize}
\item (name) TOP student
\end{itemize}
‘John is a student \{da/dearu/Ø\}.’
\end{enumerate}

In the two nominal sentences above, the use of either \textit{da} or \textit{dearu}, or the complete omission of a copula (Ø), does not change the meaning of the propositions. It is difficult to determine whether or not these sentence-final variations have any functional significance in decontextualized, isolated sentences such as (1) and (2). Hinds (1986: 134) presents actual instances of zero copula and \textit{dearu-}

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1 There are formal copula counterparts, \textit{desu} and \textit{dearimasu}, which are marked for politeness. The present study does not deal with the formal copulas, as they rarely appear in the newspaper texts examined in the study.
attached sentences from a magazine article. They are the first two sentences in the article.

(3) (Hinds 1986: 134; with minor modifications to gloss and translation)

pakisutan no toshi Karachi ni aru sakkaa-joo ni
Pakistan GEN city Karachi DAT exist soccer-field DAT
atsumatta gunshuu wa yaku 3000-nin Ø.
gathered crowd TOP about 3000-people [zero copula]
‘The crowd gathered at a soccer field in the Pakistani city of Karachi (was) about 3000 Ø.’

betsuni sakkaa geemu o kenbutushi-yoo to iu no de
particularly soccer game ACC see-VOL QT say NML COP
wa naku, karera ga katazu-o-nonde machikamaeteiru
TOP NEG they NOM hold.one’s.breath lying.in.wait
no wa
NML TOP
“isuramu hoo ga gunsei ni
Islam law NOM military.government DAT
shikoos-areru shunkan”
carry.out-PASS moment

dearu
DEARU
‘They had not come to see a soccer match; they were waiting anxiously for
“the moment at which Islamic law would go into effect” dearu.’

Though Hinds does not provide any comment on the difference between the two alternatives, we can observe that the type of information conveyed differs between the two sentences. In the first sentence, which uses the zero copula, the writer gives the numerical estimate, “about 3,000 people”, which is an objective type of information that can be verified, if necessary. On the other hand, in the second sentence with dearu, the writer characterizes the situation through the use of subjective expressions such as katazu o nonde ‘hold one’s breath’ and (shunkan o) machikamaeteiru ‘lying in wait (for the moment)’. Quantitative analysis of copular sentences from newspaper texts in the present study reveals that da, dearu, and the zero copula indeed show skewed distribution patterns with respect to the types of information to which they attach, as well as types of articles in which they tend to appear.

The organization of the rest of the paper is as follows. The next section (Section 2) gives the background for the present study. I will present and discuss previous studies on da and dearu in 2.1, and situate the present study within the
literature on stance in 2.2. Section 3 presents and describes the data for this study. Section 4 presents the frequency and distribution of three copula types among three newspaper subgenres. The quantitative findings are further explored in Section 5, in which I will qualitatively analyze actual instances of copular sentences and discuss the functions of the three copula types in the three subgenres. The study concludes with a short discussion on the location of stance in spoken and written language in Section 6.

2 Background

2.1 Previous studies on the functions of da and dearu

In traditional Japanese linguistics (kokugogaku), da and dearu are generally considered a type of auxiliary verb that expresses the speaker/writer’s assertion (dantei) or affirmative judgment (kootei handan) (e.g., Yoshida 1971; Tanaka 2001: 326, 333). With respect to the difference between da and dearu in written language, da is regarded as a colloquial written style, whereas dearu is a literary written style. Probably due to the fact that the use of dearu-style is particular to written language, some scholars claim that dearu indicates objectivity (e.g., Hinds 1986; Yamaguchi 2006: 204–205). In fact, the increase in the use of dearu under the genbun icchi undo ‘the movement for the unification of spoken and written languages’ of the Meiji period (1868–1912) has been attributed to the objective nature of dearu, which does not include any affective or interactional implications (Yamaguchi 2006: 203–204).

However, this characterization of dearu contradicts the types of texts in which dearu commonly appears. As we will see below, in newspaper texts, dearu is frequently observed in columns and editorials; it rarely appears in news reports. In novels, Tsujimura (1960) reports that dearu appears far more frequently than da in essays in which the writer freely expresses his/her thoughts. Thus, objectivity does not seem to account for the functional property of dearu in actual context of use.

2 In a broad sense, the auxiliary verb is defined as a word that follows other words and assists them in forming a predicate and/or expresses modality (Yoshida 1971: 7). Yoshida (1971: 34) notes that dearu is a compound auxiliary verb in which aru is a formal inflecting word with no semantic content in itself.
Tokieda (1950: 184) defines *dearu* as a double-predicating auxiliary, since *de* and *aru* each can be labeled as an auxiliary. Following Tokieda’s analysis, Yamazaki (1958: 231) states that *dearu* gives an impression of being strongly assertive and imposing. Yoshida (1971: 413) further argues that *dearu* is suitable when one wants to strongly express subjective opinions, but that its peremptory tone is not appropriate for conversational discourse. These characterizations of *dearu* all point to its function as an intensifier, a concept relevant to the findings in the present study.

In Western linguistic tradition, there has not been much research done on the difference between *da* and *dearu*. Maynard (1985) and Narahara (2002) are notable exceptions. Narahara (2002) argues that *da*, but not *dearu*, overtly marks the speaker’s affirmative judgment. To substantiate her claim, she presents three sentence types (those of yes/no questions, sentences with epistemic modals, and those that show the receipt of new information) that indicate the “speaker’s lack of knowledge about the relevant information” (2002: 163). In the following yes/no question, the speaker is asking whether or not a given place is quiet.

(4)  asoko shizuka {Ø/*da/*dearu} ka?  
that.place quiet Q  
‘Is that place quiet?’

The fact that the speaker is asking this question tells us that he/she does not know if the place is quiet and thus cannot affirm the truth of the information. The yes/no question is thus incompatible with the “overt affirmative marking” of *da*. This explains the ungrammaticality of *da* in (4). Narahara does not comment on the unacceptability of *dearu* in (4).

The next sentence (5), with a modal auxiliary *rashii*, can be taken as a response to the question in (4).

(5)  asoko shizuka {Ø/*da/dearu} rashii.  
that.place quiet seem  
‘It seems like that place is quiet.’

---

3 The acceptability of the sentences (4) to (10) may change if the past tense of the copulas *da* and *dearu*, *datta* and *deatta*, respectively, are used. The use of the past tense *datta* and *deatta* is outside the scope of this paper.
Narahara states that epistemic modals convey the speaker’s conjecture and thus express the lack of certainty on the part of the speaker. This is why the use of *da* results in ungrammaticality. The acceptability of *dearu* with *rashii* leads Narahara to speculate that *dearu* may not be overtly marked for the affirmative.

The receipt of information refers to the speech act of acknowledging new information (Narahara 2002: 160). Suppose the speaker of (4) above received the answer in (5) from his/her interlocutor and subsequently uttered (6).

(6)  
\[ \text{'Oh, (is) that so.'} \]

According to Narahara, instances of the receipt of new information, like yes/no questions, are incompatible with *da* as they signal the speaker’s past lack of knowledge. Although Narahara’s conclusion regarding the use of *da* basically echoes previous studies in traditional Japanese linguistics, unlike those studies, it finds a fundamental functional difference between *da* and *dearu*.

Maynard (1985) argues that *da* is used with the immediate mode of speech in direct discourse while *dearu* is used with the reflective mode of speech in indirect discourse. She presents three contexts where only *da* or *dearu* may be used. First, *da* but not *dearu* appears with so-called pragmatic or interactional particles such as *ne* and *yo*. Observe the next two sentences with the particle *yo* (7) and *ne* (8).

(7)  
\[ \text{‘Now (it’s) three o’clock, I tell you (yo).’} \]

(8)  
\[ \text{‘(It’s) already three o’clock, isn’t it (ne)?’} \]

---

4 The auxiliary *rashii* can also function as a hearsay evidential (Ishida 2006; Mushin 2001; Trent 1997). In general, evidentiality refers to the source of information, while epistemic modality refers to the degree of the speaker’s commitment to the information presented (De Haan 1999).

5 Note that *dearu* is possible if (6) (and to a lesser extent [4]) was said by a King to a servant (Iwasaki, personal communication). This is accounted for by the phenomenon called “role language,” which is a type of linguistic stereotype related to a speaker’s/character’s personal images (see Kinsui 2003).
The particles *yo* and *ne* are only used in spontaneous interaction between two or more participants. In the direct interactional exchange, only the combination of *da* and *yo/ne* is appropriate. The combination of *dearu* and *yo/ne* sounds highly unnatural because, according to Maynard, *dearu* indicates that the content of the preceding sentence reflects some forethought on the part of the speaker.

The next sentence type, “sentences of immediate description” (Maynard 1985: 373) or *genshoobun* (after Nagano 1972: 120), illustrates her point more clearly.

(9) a, kaji \{Ø/da/*dearu\}.
   INJ fire
   ‘Oh, (it’s) fire!’

(10) soo \{*Ø/da/*dearu\}. apaato no kagi o kake-te-kuru no
   so apartment GEN lock ACC lock-TE-ASP NML
   wasureta.
   forgot
   ‘Oh, no! I forgot to lock my apartment.’

The speaker of (9) has just noticed a fire and immediately calls out what he/she has seen. In this context, either the zero copula or *da* can be used, but *dearu* is unacceptable. The fact that *da*, but not *dearu*, is compatible with sentences of immediate observation suggests that *da* and *dearu* are not interchangeable and that the types of information the copulas follow differ. *Da* may be attached to an utterance indicating that the speaker has just attained the information through direct perception, as in (9), or to remembering, as in (10), in spontaneous direct discourse. *Dearu*, on the other hand, follows remarks or judgments reached after some thinking process. I agree with Maynard that *da* and *dearu* follow different types of information, but the particular context of examples (9) and (10), namely, that of direct interactional discourse, makes it difficult to discern the reason for the ungrammaticality of *dearu*. Since *dearu* almost exclusively appears in written discourse, its mere appearance in interactional spoken discourse may result in unnaturalness. The more suitable data for investigating *dearu* would be written texts in which *dearu* regularly appears.

6 The sentence type basically parallels what Kuno (1972: 272) terms “neutral description.”

7 As one reviewer points out, the difference in the type of information *da* and *dearu* follow may also be associated with iconicity (Haiman 1983). The conceptual distance between the actual perception/remembering of an event and the speaker’s interpretation of the event is greater in the case of *dearu*, the longer form of the two, than that of *da*. 
According to Maynard, one syntactic environment in which *dearu* but not *da* can be used is the complement clause. In the next sentence (11a) taken from Maynard (1985: 375), a complement clause in the square brackets is headed by a complementizer/nominalizer *koto*.

(11) a. [kore ga watashi no kaita ronbun {*da/dearu}] koto
    this NOM I GEN wrote thesis NML
    wa akiraka desu.
  TOP obvious COP
  ‘It’s obvious that this is the thesis I wrote.’

The content of the complement clause represents the speaker’s judgment rather than an immediate description of an event. Since interpretation cannot be reached immediately and requires some thought process on the part of the speaker, *da* results in ungrammaticality. Although Maynard’s explanation seems plausible, the unacceptability of *da* may be a consequence of syntactic restriction rather than semantic incompatibility. For example, if we insert the expression *to yuu* after the complement clause, either *da* or *dearu* becomes a grammatical choice.

(11) b. [kore ga watashi no kaita ronbun {da/dearu}] to yuu
    this NOM I GEN wrote thesis QT say
    koto wa akiraka desu.
  NML TOP obvious COP
  ‘It’s obvious that this is the thesis I wrote.’

The *to yuu* indicates the lower degree of certainty on the part of either the speaker or the addressee (as judged by the speaker) about the information expressed in the complement clause (Iwasaki 2002: 200–206). In (11b), the predicate *akiraka desu* ‘is obvious’ suggests that the speaker is certain about the information but judges the addressee not to be so. More importantly, the complement clause in (11b) represents the speaker’s interpretation just as in (11a), so the acceptability of *da* contradicts Maynard’s analysis. In addition, if we replace the complementizer *koto* with another complementizer *no*, the resulting sentence is (11c).

(11) c. [kore ga watashi no kaita ronbun {na/*da/dearu}] no
    this NOM I GEN wrote thesis NML
    wa akiraka desu.
  TOP obvious COP
  ‘It’s obvious that this is the thesis I wrote.’
In (11c), the attributive form of the copula da, namely, na, is a possible grammatical choice. Furthermore, if a nominal adjective instead of a noun was used in the complement clause as in (12), the attributive form of the copula can be used with either koto or no.

(12) [asoko ga shizuka {na/*da/dearu}] {koto/no} wa
    that.place NOM quiet NML NML TOP
    akiraka da.
    obvious COP
    ‘It’s obvious that that place is quiet.’

As we have seen above, when the copulas are used sentence-internally, the ungrammaticality of the copula da may result from syntactic rather than semantic or pragmatic constraints. While the dearu copula type only has one form for both conclusive and attributive syntactic positions, the da copula type has different forms for these positions. The copulas’ inflectional forms are represented in (13) and (14).

(13) Forms of dearu
    Conclusive: dearu
    Attributive: dearu

(14) Forms of da
    Conclusive: da
    Attributive: na (following nominal adjective); no/na (following noun)

Sentence-internal positions may require forms other than conclusive forms, and hence are not an ideal environment for comparing functions of da and dearu. For this reason, in the present study, I will limit my data to sentence-final occurrences of the zero copula, da, and dearu.

The traditional Japanese linguists’ and Narahara’s claim that da (but not dearu) indicates the speaker’s assertion (daintei) or affirmative judgment is compatible with the function of da found in the present study; however, the present study seeks to locate the function of da in the actual discourse context, rather than within a constructed sentential environment. The characteristics of dearu suggested in Maynard are also relevant to the current study. Unlike da, dearu follows the information that is reached after reflection and interpretation on the part of the speaker.

In terms of the source of data, an ideal data set for a comparative examination of da and dearu would consist of formal written texts in which both copula
types are regularly used. Maynard (1985) looks at the uses of da and dearu in modern novels, and proposes that fiction writers deploy da and dearu to manipulate the viewpoint from which they present events in narrative scenes. When da is used, an event is reported from the internal viewpoint, as if the writer is witnessing the event then and there. On the contrary, when dearu is used, an event is described from the external point of view, that is, the writer is an outsider to the scene and is narrating “about” that event. The internal–external distinction is not applicable to the use of da and dearu in newspaper texts, since the journalist usually places himself/herself outside the event being described. It suggests that the functions of the copula types may be more or less specialized to serve the specific need of a given genre.

2.2 Stance marking in spoken discourse and written texts

As I mentioned in the introduction, stance taking is often associated with interactional spoken discourse. For example, through a detailed conversation analysis, Heritage and Raymond (2005) demonstrate how an evaluative stance is being negotiated and jointly constructed through ongoing interaction between participants. Englebretson (2007: 13–14, 19) stresses the interactional and collaborative nature of stance, and Du Bois (2007: 163) defines stance as “a public act [...] achieved dialogically through overt communicative means.”

The interactional aspect of stance by no means precludes written texts as a relevant type of data for investigating stance. So long as the purpose of writing is communication, it entails an interpersonal relationship between the writer and the readers, and it therefore is dialogic. In addition, in both spoken and written discourse, the absence of stance marking must also be recognized as a kind of stance expression. Biber and Finegan (1988: 31) call this type of stance “faceless,” which indicates the absence of personal judgments and expressions of subjective attitude and commitment. From this perspective, the most useful definition of stance is one that does not exclude objectivity as one type of stance.

In this study, stance is broadly defined as “the lexical and grammatical expression of attitudes, feelings, judgments, or commitment concerning the propositional content of a message” (Biber and Finegan 1989: 92). In Japanese, adverbs, verbal suffixes, modal auxiliaries, and sentence-final particles are often associated with stance expressions. Most of these linguistic resources are located at the sentence-final position. In traditional Japanese linguistics, the sentence-final position has long been identified as the place for chinjutsu ‘expression of subjectivity’ or ‘modality’ which is syntactically preceded by jojutsu ‘ideational
predication’ or ‘proposition’ (Watanabe 1953). Haga (1954) further divides chinjutsu into juttei ‘expression of speaker’s attitude toward the proposition’ and dentatsu ‘expression of illocutionary force directed toward the addressee’. Thus, in a sentence, a non-subjective proposition is followed by a subjective element, which is further followed by an intersubjective element, as represented in Figure 1. The copula types investigated in the present study appear in the subjective element position.

Figure 1: Location of stance.

3 The data

The dataset for this study comes from printed newspaper articles in the Asahi Shim bun, a major Japanese newspaper. Articles containing da and dearu were retrieved using Kikuzo II Visual, an online newspaper database and search engine, provided by the Asahi Shim bun Company.8 I used the following search options:

- Keywords: だ。(da.) / である。(dearu.)
- Date of issue: 1 January 2011 to 1 March 2011
- Editions: Morning edition
- Pages: Front page, General, Nation, World, Politics, Economics
- Regions: National edition
- Offices: Tokyo

From this search, 1,885 articles were retrieved for da and 153 articles were retrieved for dearu. I then extracted news reports, editorials, and columns titled tensei jingo ‘heaven’s voice, human words (lit.)’ from the total number of articles. There were 1,195 news reports, 108 editorials, and 55 columns. Among these, I sampled 43 news reports, 41 editorials, and 43 column articles for further analysis. These sampled texts were manually checked for instances of sentence-final da, dearu, and the zero copula. The results of the quantitative analyses are presented in the next section.

4 Frequency and distribution of the copula types

First, *da* and *dearu* show a stark contrast in the types of articles in which they tend to appear. In particular, *dearu* appears with the highest frequency in the subgenre of Editorials (55.6%), followed by that of Columns (29.4%), and, rarely, in news reports (henceforth, News) (2.6%). In contrast, *da* is frequently observed in News (63.3%), but very infrequently in Editorials and Columns (5.6% and 2.8%, respectively). The types of articles containing *da* or *dearu* and their proportions are presented in Tables 1 and 2.

Further examination of News, Editorials, and Columns retrieved from the initial searches revealed that some of the articles in Tables 1 and 2 actually contained both *da* and *dearu*. Table 3 represents the distribution of *da* and *dearu* in the three article subgenres.

**Table 1:** Newspaper subgenres containing *da*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subgenre</th>
<th>No. of articles</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>News</td>
<td>1,194</td>
<td>63.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editorials</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columns</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>533</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,885</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2:** Newspaper subgenres containing *dearu*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subgenre</th>
<th>No. of articles</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>News</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editorials</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>55.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columns</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>29.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3:** Distribution of *da* and *dearu* in three subgenres.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subgenre</th>
<th><em>da</em> &amp; <em>dearu</em></th>
<th><em>da</em> only</th>
<th><em>dearu</em> only</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1191</td>
<td>99.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editorials</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>75.9</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columns</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No. = number of articles
There are a couple of notable points. First, across all three subgenres, articles that only contain *dearu* are scarce. Second, an overwhelming majority of News (99.7%) only contains *da*, while a majority of Editorials and Columns contains both *da* and *dearu* (75.9% and 80%, respectively).

Since the major objective of this study is to examine the uses and functions of *da*, *dearu*, and the zero copula, I chose to look at articles that contained both *da* and *dearu* for further analysis whenever possible.\(^9\) I used all 43 articles in Columns, and sampled 41 articles (every other article) in Editorials. For News, which only had three articles that contained both *da* and *dearu*, I used those three, another article containing only *dearu*, and sampled 39 articles from 1,191 (every 30th article) that only contained *da*. In total, 43 articles were obtained for News, 41 articles for Editorials, and 43 articles for Columns.

Examination of nominal sentences in the sampled Editorial, Column, and News articles reveals that Columns contain all three types of copula, namely, *da*, *dearu*, and the zero copula, while Editorials and News show skewed distribution patterns. Observe Tables 4, 5, and 6.

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**Table 4:** Distribution of copulas in Columns (43 texts).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Copula</th>
<th>No. of tokens</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>da</em></td>
<td>89</td>
<td>48.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>dearu</em></td>
<td>66</td>
<td>36.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Table 5:** Distribution of copulas in Editorials (41 texts).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Copula</th>
<th>No. of tokens</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>da</em></td>
<td>162</td>
<td>62.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>dearu</em></td>
<td>89</td>
<td>34.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

9 As shown in Table 3, there were 3 News, 82 Editorials, and 43 Columns that fit this description.
Table 5 shows that nominal sentences in Editorials tend to end with *da* or *dearu* and rarely in bare nominals. On the other hand, as shown in Table 6, sentences in News tend to end in *da* or bare nominals and seldom with *dearu*. To the extent that all three copula types appear more or less frequently in Columns (Table 4), and at least two copula types appear in Editorials and News, the three copula types are neither genre-specific nor simple stylistic variants that are used only in certain types of texts. At the same time, the observed divergence in the distribution of the copula types among the three subgenres suggests that there may be an interrelationship between the function of each copula and the major objective of the specific text type.

In order to further explore the idea that the three copula types are not simple stylistic variants as well as to shed light on the possible interrelationship between text types and functions of the copulas, we must look closer at the actual environments where these copulas are at work.

### 5 Functions of three copula types

In this section, I will analyze the semantic and pragmatic properties of sentences ending with *da*, *dearu*, and the zero copula in three subgenres with the intention of illuminating the functions of the three copula types in newspaper discourse.

#### 5.1 Da

The copula *da* appears more or less frequently across the three subgenres. Table 7 shows information types co-occurring with *da*.

Opinion is the most common information type in all three subgenres, but it is particularly common in Editorials. The frequency of hearsay is much higher in Columns than in the other two subgenres. This is related to the frequent use of the evidential modal *soo* in Columns. The frequency of inference is much higher...
in News. This is reflected in part by the use of formal nouns such as moyoo ‘pattern’, katachi ‘shape’, and kakkoo ‘appearance’.

### 5.1.1 da in columns

Out of 89 da-marked sentences in Columns, 40% express the writer’s opinions (36/89; 40.4%). About a quarter express hearsay (22/89; 24.7%), and 13% are identificational (12/89; 13.5%). (15), (16), and (17) are examples of opinion, hearsay, and identificational sentences.

(15) Opinion + da (Column)

```
kanmon wa, kokunaishiyoo no kasen ni me-o-hikaraseru kooseetorihikiinkai da.
```

‘The obstacle is the Fair Trade Commission, which keeps a close eye on the domestic oligopoly.’

(16) Hearsay + da (Column)

```
minshutoo daigishikai ga mata ooare shita soo soo
```

‘(I) heard that the Democratic Party meeting fell into great confusion again.’
Identification + da (Column)
iyahon no otomore da.
earphone GEN sound.leak DA

‘(It = annoying noise in trains) is a sound leak from earphones.’

The frequent co-occurrence of da with the evidential modal soo, which is a marker of secondhand information (Iwasaki 2002: 281), is a unique feature of Columns. Unlike other evidentials, yoo, mitaii, and rashii, which can also mark inference based on some evidence, soo simply indicates that the information presented is obtained secondhand (Aoki 1986; Ishida 2006). The explicit marking of secondhand information in itself conveys a certain stance of the writer. Since most information presented in newspaper discourse is secondhand and the readers are generally aware of this fact, there is no need to overtly indicate the secondhand status of the information. In fact, in the present data, I did not find even a single instance of the hearsay evidential soo in News or Editorials. The use of soo is one way through which the Column writers communicate their individual identity separate from the newspaper’s institutional identity. That is, while the writers of News and Editorials assume authority in reporting events as firsthand information (due to convenience and the assumed social role of the newspapers to report news), columnists disjoin themselves from the general authoritative stance of the newspaper media discourse. Here we see a clear divergence in the viewpoints of Column and Editorial discourse (more on this below).

5.1.2 da in editorials

Among 162 da-marked sentences in Editorials, close to 70% express the writer’s opinions (113/162; 69.8%), and 12% give explanations for some other reported events (20/162; 12.3%). (18) and (19) are instances of opinion and explanation.

(18) Opinion + da (Editorial)
kaku-tero yokushi to tomo ni, kaku
nuclear.terrorism deterrence COM together DAT nuclear

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10 The hearsay evidential soo is to be distinguished from visual evidential soo. “When it follows the plain form of a verb or adjective, or the copula, it marks hearsay; but when it follows the infinitive form of verbs, the vowel ending root of an adjective, or a noun and nominal adjective without a copula, it marks visual evidence” (Iwasaki 2002: 281).
Together with deterrence against nuclear terrorism, how to prevent nuclear proliferation is an important issue.

The first reason is that the forced prosecution, by the Committee for the Inquest of Prosecution, which consists of civil representatives, is essentially different from the prosecution by public prosecutors, in which conviction rates are extremely high.

*Da*-marked opinions in Editorials often contain words such as *hitsuyoo* ‘necessary’, *juuyoo* ‘important’, and auxiliary *beki* ‘must’. Combination of these evaluative expressions and the copula *da* creates the distinctly argumentative tone of Editorial texts, which contrasts curiously with the witty tone of Columns, despite the fact that both are opinion-bearing texts.

### 5.1.3 *da* in News

In News, 30% of *da*-marked sentences express opinions (19/62; 30.6%) and 20% give explanations (12/62; 19.4%) as represented in (20) and (21) below.
daimondai
da.
great.problem DA

‘However, the fixed game is a great problem which concerns the basis of sports.’

(21) Explanation + da (News)
...
takyuudan no gasshuku chuushi ga
other.team GEN training.camp cancellation NOM
aitsugi,
one.after.another
renshuujiai ga kuminikui koto ga
practice.game NOM difficult.to.schedule NML NOM
ookina riyuu da.
big reason DA

‘... the big reason is that other (baseball) teams canceled training camps one after another, and it is difficult to schedule a practice game.’

What is distinct to News is that close to 30% of da-marked sentences present inference (17/62; 27.4%) and 13% present third-party perspective (8/62; 12.9%). (22) and (23) are instances of inference and third-party perspective.

(22) Inference + da (News)
oosaka-ken, nagoya-ken demo ninki
Osaka.area nagoya.area also popular
no juutakuchi de
GEN residential.area LOC
jooshoo ga mirareru moyoo
increase NOM seen seem

da.
DA

‘(It) seems that in popular residential districts in Osaka and Nagoya, (the price) increase will also be seen.’

(23) Third party perspective + da (News)
shushoo wa yoyatoo no kyoogi
prime.minister TOP ruling.and.opposition.parties GEN talk
o susumeta
ACC proceeded
The prime minister’s thinking is to proceed with the talks between the ruling and opposition parties, and hopefully put together a concrete plan by June this year.

5.1.4 Function of *da*

Information types co-occurring with the copula *da* lack factivity, as in cases of opinions, hearsay, inference, and third-party perspective, or when the relevance of information marked by *da* is dependent on the preceding discourse, as in cases of identification and explanation. Co-occurring with these types of information, *da* indexes the writer’s strong commitment to the information expressed in the preceding sentence. In order to explicate the function of *da*, it is useful to distinguish the notion of evidentiality from that of epistemicity. Evidentiality is concerned with source of information (Bybee 1985: 184) while epistemicity refers to degree of speaker or writer commitment (Thompson and Mulac 1991: 313). I propose that *da* is a discourse-oriented epistemic stance marker indicating the writer’s strong commitment to the validity and relevance of the proposition in the current discourse context without making any reference to the source of information. It is important to stress here that what *da* indexes is the writer’s commitment, not to the truth of the proposition as proposed in the previous literature, but to the relevance of the information for the current discourse context. The frequent use of *da* with hearsay, inference, and third-party perspective is a case in point.

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11 I recognize that these two concepts do not always constitute discrete categories (Lyons 1977; Palmer 1986; Traugott 1989). For instance, as I mentioned earlier in this paper, auxiliaries *rashii*, *yoo*, and *mitai* are concerned with both a speaker’s/writer’s source of information and his/her commitment to the status of information.
5.2 Dearu

The copula *dearu* appears fairly frequently in Columns and Editorials but rarely appears in News.\(^{12}\) In Columns in particular, information marked by *dearu* tends to be affectively salient. Affective stance refers to “a mood, attitude, feeling, and disposition, as well as degrees of emotional intensity vis-à-vis some focus of concern” (Ochs 1996: 410). One instantiation of the affective stance is metaphor (Kullavanijaya 1997; Dorfmuller-Karpusa 1990: 477), as in (24) to (26).

(24) Metaphor + *dearu* (Column)
*ira-nu okimiyage *dearu.*
need-NEG parting.gift *DEARU*
‘(It = pollen) is an unwanted parting gift.’

(25) Metaphor + *dearu* (Column)
*oboroyo to yobu ni wa hayai ga, meguru*
night.with.a.hazy.moon QT call DAT TOP early but go.around
*kisetsu o omow-aseru e *dearu.*
season ACC think:CAUS picture *DEARU*
‘(It = view of the moon between skyscrapers in Tokyo) is a picture that makes us think of the change of season, although it is too early to call it a night with a hazy moon.’

(26) Metaphor + *dearu* (Column)
*tsugitsugito furikakaru nandai o mae ni*
one.after.another happen difficult.problem ACC front DAT
*kessoku unite*
*subeki toki ni, aa inu mo kuwa-nai kenyokugeki*
do:should time DAT INJ dog even eat-NEG power.farce
*DEARU.*
‘When they should be uniting as they face many difficult problems, ah, (it) is a farce of power grabbing that no one in his right mind wants anything to do with (lit. even a dog would not eat).’

\(^{12}\) The most common information types co-occurring with *dearu* are characterization (51.5%), description (15.1%), and opinion (12.1%) in Columns, and opinion (43.8%), characterization (19.1%), and evaluation (12.4%) in Editorials. These general information types alone do not shed light on the function of *dearu*; a closer look is necessary.
Prior to the sentence in (24), the writer mentioned how the amount of pollen in the air is unusually high this year and that it is due to male flowers growing well because of good weather and the high temperatures of the previous summer. Then, in (24), the writer characterizes the pollen as an unwanted parting gift of the male flowers. In (25), the writer characterizes the moon he saw between skyscrapers in Tokyo by using a metaphor of a picture. In the preceding text of (26), the writer discussed struggles between two political leaders. In (26), the struggle is characterized through a metaphor of a farce. In all cases, we can sense the writers’ emotional involvement, whether positive or negative, in describing or evaluating the topic under discussion. The fact that the whole sentence is devoted to the metaphorical characterization (i.e., the topic is unexpressed) underscores the expression of the writer’s affective stance.

Dearu also co-appears with opinions involving affect-laden words or expressions as shown in the following examples.

(27) Affect-laden opinion + dearu (Column)

toohyoo de kokusei o ninau senryoo ga,
voting INS national.government ACC shoulder representative NOM
dearu.
DEARU
‘(It) is the representatives of the people who shoulder the affairs of the country.’

(28) Affect-laden opinion + dearu (Column)

subete no seien ya kaisetsu o azawarau gu
all GEN cheer and comment ACC make.a.mockery stupidity
dearu.
DEARU
‘(This) is stupidity that makes a mockery of every cheer and comment.’

In (27), dearu directly follows the nominative phrase with the subject marker ga without a predicate. Prior to this sentence, the writer quoted some exchanges between Diet members, which, according to the writer, resembled a quarrel between elementary school students. By using the elliptical clause and labeling the subjects as “the representatives of the people”, the writer highlights his negative evaluation toward what they have done. In (28), the writer’s affective stance is indicated through the use of evaluative terms azawarau ‘make a mockery’ and gu ‘stupidity’, as well as the use of the universal quantifier subete ‘every’, which extends the assertion to the extreme.
Unlike Columns, we do not find many expressions of affective stance in Editorials. Nevertheless, dearu-marked sentences in Editorials tend to contain emphatic subjective expressions, as we can see in the next set of examples.

(29) Emphasis + dearu (Editorial)
izuremo kotoshi koso ga shoonenbana no dearu.
either this.year HP NOM crucial.point NML DEARU
‘In any case, (it) is really this year that is the crucial point.’

(30) Emphasis + dearu (Editorial)
kondo koso honki de okinawa no futan keegen ni
this.time HP seriousness COP Okinawa GEN burden ease DAT
mukiau beki dearu.
face should DEARU
‘This time, (they) really should face the issue of easing Okinawa’s burden.’

(31) Emphasis + dearu (Editorial)
jitsugen e no saidai no haadoru to naru no
realization to GEN biggest GEN hurdle COM become NML
ga dokusenkinshihoo dearu.
NOM antimonopoly.law DEARU
‘The biggest hurdle to realization is the Antimonopoly Law.’

In (29) and (30), the writers use the highlighting particle koso to emphasize the urgent nature of the event or action under discussion. The superlative saidai ‘the biggest’ in (31) also expresses the emphatic stance of the writer.

As we have seen in this section, dearu follows expressions of affective stance (in the case of Columns) and of emphasis (in the case of Editorials). Appearing at the sentence-final position, dearu functions to intensify the affective and emphatic stance expressed in the preceding propositions. “Intensity” is defined as “the linguistic means, used in a discourse/text, which allow the receiver to comprehend the degree of personal involvement of the producer towards the described states of affairs” (Dorfmuller-Karpusa 1990: 477). Contrary to what has been suggested in the previous literature, that dearu marks objectivity, the analysis of actual examples in newspaper discourse suggests that dearu denotes subjectivity expressing the writer’s emphatic stance. It was noted earlier that dearu-attached sentences rarely appear in News (4/116 or 3.4%). Based on the present analysis, the absence of dearu in News is explained by the characteristics of News texts of reporting facts and maintaining objectivity.
5.3 The zero copula

The zero copula appears most frequently in News (50/116; 43.1%), less frequently in Columns (28/183; 15.3%), and very infrequently in Editorials (10/261; 3.8%). The use of the bare nominal can be categorized into two types. The first type is the presentation of fact, a majority of which is numerical or temporal, as shown in the examples below.\(^\text{13}\)

(32) Numerical information + zero copula (Column)

\textit{suitee juuryoo wa jitsuni 1358-ton \textbf{0}.}

\textit{estimate weight TOP indeed 1358-ton \textbf{[zero copula]}}

‘The estimated weight is indeed 1358 tons.’

(33) Numerical information + zero copula (News)

\textit{kiso nenkin wa 40-nenkan hokenryoo o haraitsuzuketa}

\textit{basic pension TOP 40-years premium ACC continue.paying}

\textit{mangaku no hito de 6-man 6-sen}

\textit{full.amount GEN person COP 60-thousand 6-thousand en \textbf{0}.}

\textit{yen \textbf{[zero copula]}}

‘The basic pension is 66,000 yen per month for those who paid the full premium for forty years.’

The second type can be labeled non-predicate NP. Let us look at some examples.

(34) Non-predicate NP + zero copula (News)

\textit{10-ka asa no shamintoo joonin-kanjikai}

\textit{tenth morning GEN social.democratic.party board.meeting \textbf{0}.}

\textit{[zero copula]}

‘The Social Democratic Party board meeting on the morning of the 10th.’

\(^{13}\) The percentages of numerical/temporal information are as follows: Editorials (100%), News (60%), and Columns (43%).
These NPs present various types of information, (34), indicating location, (35), topic, and (36), time, but none of them serve as a predicate or comment. For this reason, the second bare nominal type will be excluded from the cases of the zero copula looked at below. Tables 4′, 5′, and 6′ show the distribution of the zero copula in three subgenres after excluding all the cases of non-predicate NP.

The zero copula still appears frequently in News, but the number of tokens decreased by half for both Columns and Editorials.

The majority of the few instances of the zero copula found in Editorials turn out to have numerical predicates, as in (37).

Although it is a long-established international meeting begun in 1971, this is the 4th time a Japanese prime minister has participated, following Mori Yoshiroo, Fukuda Yasuo, and Aso Taro.’
In summary, the zero copula covertly indicates the writer’s stance that the information is to be taken as objective fact. The zero copula can be labeled a “faceless” stance marker (Biber and Finegan 1988, Biber and Finegan 1989), as it does not explicitly indicate the existence of a subject who is taking a particular stance.

### 6 Discussion and conclusion

In this paper, I have analyzed the uses of the three copula types *da*, *dearu*, and the zero copula in three subgenres. Table 8 summarizes the major findings regarding the uses and functions of the three copula types in three subgenres of newspaper discourse.
The *da* marking is concerned with indexing the epistemic stance of the writer while the *dearu* marking has more to do with communicating the writer’s subjective and emphatic stance.

The zero copula represents what has been termed a “faceless stance” (Biber and Finegan 1988, Biber and Finegan 1989; Kim and Biber 1994), reporting information as factual events or entities. The zero copula is observed most frequently in News, the main objective of which is the reportage of hard facts. This is also reflected in the limited usage of *dearu*-marking in News; expressing one’s subjective attitudes or emotions does not serve the primary purpose of news reportage. At the same time, the substantial use of *da*-marking in News indicates that they are not entirely “faceless,” though the kind of stance expressed is restricted to the writer’s discourse-oriented epistemic stance.

The discourse-oriented stance marker *da* is located between subjective and intersubjective elements as seen in Figure 2.

### Table 8: Summary of three copula types in newspaper discourse.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Copula</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Type of information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>da</em></td>
<td>Indexes the writer’s strong commitment to the validity and relevance of the information in the current discourse context</td>
<td>Editorial, News, Column</td>
<td>opinion, hearsay (Column), identification, explanation, inference, third-party perspective (News)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>dearu</em></td>
<td>Indexes the emphatic stance of the writer</td>
<td>Column, Editorial</td>
<td>metaphor, affect-laden opinion, emphatic evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>zero</em></td>
<td>Indicates that the information is factual</td>
<td>News, Column</td>
<td>numerical information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The use of *da* as a discourse-oriented stance marker seems to be a genre-specific feature of newspaper discourse. In spontaneous conversation, the copula *da* is often followed by conjunctive particles such as *kedo* and *shi*, which are further followed by interactional particles such as *ne* and *sa* (Figure 3).
In formal written language, at least in newspaper discourse, addressee-oriented stance is not expressed, and conjunctives do not appear sentence-finally (Figure 4). This may be why the sentence final *da* has taken over the function of discourse-stance expression.

Even within written language, the particular needs of specific genres are distinct from one another and they are closely interrelated to the functional properties of certain grammatical elements. For instance, the internal versus external distinction Maynard (1985) found in the uses of *da* and *dearu* in novels contrasts with the epistemic versus emphatic stance-marking functions of *da* and *dearu* in newspaper texts found in the present study. In the case of *dearu*, we have also seen that the general emphatic stance-marking function is
exploited for different purposes by different subgenres. In Columns, it was used as an affect intensifier, while in Editorials, it was employed with other emphatic particles and adverbs to stress the point being made in the proposition.

In conclusion, the three copulas da, dearu, and the zero copula are found to have genre-specific functions in newspaper discourse. Da is a discourse-oriented epistemic stance marker. Dearu is an emphatic stance marker. The zero copula is a faceless stance marker that indicates the writer’s stance that the information is factual. I hope to have shown that the copulas da and dearu, and non-use of copula are not simple stylistic variants, but they are important resources at the journalists’ disposal for expressing their epistemic, affective, and objective stance. As much as the specific kind of stance expressed through the use of the three copula types is being shaped by functional objectives and concerns of the particular genre, it, in turn, shapes the unique quality and nature of the genre itself.

Appendix: list of abbreviations

| ACC | accusative | HP | highlighting particle | NOM | nominative |
| ASP | aspect | INJ | interjection | PASS | passive |
| CAUS | causative | INS | instrumental | Q | question |
| COM | comitative | IP | interactional particle | QT | quotation |
| COP | copula verb | LOC | locative | TE | te (conjunctive) form |
| DAT | dative | NEG | negative | TOP | topic marker |
| EVD | evidential | NML | nominalizer | VOL | volitional |
| GEN | genitive | |

References


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