

Referring in Spontaneous Speech in a Language that Lacks Articles

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Backgrounds

- Japanese Map Task Corpus
 - created in 1994
 - extensively analyzed since then
 - to be published soon
- Two “myths” of referring
 - The English myth
 - The Japanese myth
- The real data
- Based on Yoshiko Kawabata’s MA thesis

Japanese Map Task Corpus

- 128 dialogs, 23 hours 64 participants
- Analyzed in terms of
 - Turn taking
 - Interruptions and overlaps
 - speech rate
 - initiative
 - eye contact
 - discourse structure
 - and many other things

The English myth

- “The theory of definit description”
 - by Russell, 1905
 - tripartite analysis
 - existence
 - attribution
 - uniqueness
- “Universe of Discourse”
 - introduction
 - definite reference afterwards
- “The” : the definite article
- “the new theory of reference”

The Japanese myth

- Demonstrative adnominals
 - kore/kono
 - sore/sono
 - are/ano
- Lots of theories
 - Sakuma
 - Kamio
 - Mikami
 - Yoshimoto
 - Takubo and Kinsui
- Anaphoric vs. deictic

A natural question

- what happens in the Japanese map task corpus?
 - without definite descriptions
 - proportion of ko/so/a
- Modeling the referring in the corpus

Theoretical predictions

- Kinds of expressions
 - demonstrative pronouns(kore/sore/are)
 - demonstrative adnominals(kono/sono/ano)
 - proper nouns
 - adnominal modifier + NP
 - bare NP
- Prediction: Demonstrative will be used to refer to things in the discourse, due to uniqueness and definiteness

Theoretical predictions

- Assuming all referings are “anaphoric” in the sense that there are two maps not shared and that people are not in the same “room”
- “A” and “So” will be used
 - “A” in the case when “shared” in Kuno and Yoshimoto, and in the case when the reference is in the direct experience area in Takubo/Kinsui
 - “So” in the case when “not shared” in Kuno and Yoshimoto and in the case it is in the indirect experience area

Facts about 16 dialogs

- demonstrative/names only=390/1506
 - share: 62/814
 - A/P: 50/246
 - NC 16/79
 - 2:1 : 22/93
 - others: 240/274
 - landmarks: 150/1232
- ko/so/a
 - landmarks 16/185/4
 - others 71/264/11
 - total: 87/449/11

- people use names
 - did some further experiments with maps with single duplicated landmarks equally arranged for the giver and the follower, in which participants tried to name them
- the occurrence of “a” suppressed somehow, maybe in cases when the reference is “concurrently” referenced
 - but map task may be an odd situation, in the sense the “sharedness” can not be well defined due to the laboratory situation

- Names and naming are important
 - “Definite Description” and “definite reference” are not important when discussing “referring in spontaneous dialogs”
- Need to retheorize about “ko/so/a” distinctions
 - Not why use, but why not use
 - the conceptual problem of referring in Japanese in general