

When locational expressions are not locational: the case of Japanese demonstratives

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Particular conceptions have sufficient cognitive salience that they often function as the prototypes for grammatical elements (see Langacker 2008: 97). We present evidence from Japanese as well as Basque that suggests that a certain kind of spatial relation is the conceptual archetype of locative expressions across languages.

Japanese demonstrative pronouns *koko*, *soko*, and *asoko* are commonly described as denoting locations as opposed to objects, often without further explication (see Teramura 1968, Takubo 1984, and Moriyama 1988 among others). We demonstrate when and why these locational demonstratives (hereafter LDs) can refer to objects that do not function as locations, thereby revealing how we conceptualize locations.

LDs can denote the spatial landmark (SL) of an IN/ON relation. The sentences in (1) each describe the location of the addressee's key in relation to the landmark of an IN/ON relation.

(1) *kinoo mise-ta {bessool/hondanal/kuruma}*, *asoko ni kimi no kagi ga ar-u yo.*
(yesterday show-PST {cottage/bookshelf/car}, that.place LOC 2SG GEN key NOM exist-PRS SFP)
'The {cottage/bookshelf/car} I showed you yesterday, that's where your key is.'

Some objects, however, can be referred to by LDs even when they do not serve as landmarks. For example, you can sometimes use *asoko* to refer to something you designed, but not always, as shown in (2). An LD can refer to something other than a landmark if its referent is an **entity that has ample space for a human being and is fixed with respect to a reference frame** (hereafter a **locational object** or **LO**). Fixed entities without ample space for humans, such as bookshelves or utility poles, cannot be referred to by LDs unless they serve as landmarks. Nor can mobile entities with ample space for humans (e.g. vehicles).

(2) *kinoo mise-ta {bessool/*hondanal/*kuruma}*, *asoko wa boku ga sekkei si-ta.*
(yesterday show-PST {cottage/bookshelf/car}, that.place TOP 1SG NOM design do-PST)
'The {cottage/*bookshelf/*car} I showed you yesterday, I designed it.'

LDs in Japanese can thus refer to both SLs and LOs. We propose that the LO use constitutes an extension from a particular variant of the SL use, one where the trajector is human and the landmark is fixed. A similar extension can be found with the locative genitive case in Basque, which typically marks a SL as in (3a). It can also indicate that the noun phrase it is assigned to refers to a LO that participates in a non-locative relation (e.g. part-whole, which is exemplified by [3b]). Notice (3c) illustrates that the case cannot mark part-whole relations whose trajector is not a LO. (See Aurnague 1998 for details.)

(3) a. {Etxe/oto}-ko gatua b. etxe-ko teilatuak c. ?oto-ko bortak
{house/car}-LOC.GEN cat.the) (house-LOC.GEN roofs.the) (car-LOC.GEN doors.the)
'the cat in the {house/car}' 'the house's roofs' 'the car's doors'

These facts clearly show that the concept of LO functions as the category prototype for locative expressions in Japanese and Basque. The commonality across those geographically and genetically distant languages strongly suggests that the concept has universal cognitive salience. In support of this suggestion, we attempt to show that localizers in Chinese and locative nouns in Ainu can be revealingly analyzed in terms of LO.

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