On the Expletive Status of Copulas in Japanese and Mandarin: A View from Answers to Narrow Focus Questions

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1 Introduction

This paper discusses copulas in Japanese and Mandarin Chinese (henceforth, Mandarin). There are similar expressions with copula in both languages. Observe (copular elements are marked in bold in (1) and (2)):

(1) *Japanese*
  a. * *Taro-wa   gakusei   **da/desu**[1,2]*   (nominal predication)
       Taro-TOP   student   COP
       'Taro is a student.'
  b.   *Taro-ga   katta   no   wa   kuruma(-o)   **da/desu***. (cleft)
       Taro-NOM   bought   GEN   TOP   car(-ACC)   COP
       'It is a car that Taro bought.'
  c. A: *Taro-wa   Hanako-o   sonkei   si-tei-mas-u.*
       Taro-TOP   Hanako-ACC   respect   do-PROG-HON-PRS
     B: *Bill-mo   **da/desu.***   (stripping)
       Bill-also   COP

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[1] *desu* is an honorific form of *da*. We mainly investigate *desu* in discussing copula *da*.

[2] Abbreviations are as follows: ACC = accusative, COP = copula, DAT = dative, EXP = experience, GEN =genitive, HON = honorific, NEG = negation, NOM = nominative, PROG = progressive, PRS = present, PST = past, PART = particle, Q = question, TOP = topic.

'A: Taro respects Hanako. B: Bill does <respect her>, too.'

(2) *Mandarin*

　　a.　　*Taro*　　***shì***　　*xuéshēng*.　　(nominal predication)
　　　　　Taro　　COP　　student
　　　　　'Taro is a student.'

　　b.　　*Taro*　　*mǎide*　　***shì***　　*chē*.　　(cleft)
　　　　　Taro　　bought　　COP　　car
　　　　　'It is a car that Taro bought.'

　　c.　A: *Taro*　　*zūnjìng*　　*Hanako*.
　　　　　Taro　　respect　　Hanako

　　　　B: *Bill*　　*yě*　　***shì***.　　(stripping)
　　　　　Bill　　also　　COP
　　　　　'A: Taro respects Hanako. B: Bill does <respect her>, too.'

In (1a) and (2a), the copulas in both languages, namely *desu* and *shi* respectively, connect two nominals, expressing subject–predicate relationships. Our concern regards sentences such as (1b, c) and (2b, c). These copulas are observed in both cleft and stripping (also called *fragments*). Notably, these two constructions serve as focus-inducing; for example, the cleft construction, as in (1b) and (1c), is known as an expression tied to identificational focus (È Kiss 1998), and stripping is also taken to be a focus phenomenon given that the phrase *Bill* in (1cB) and (2cB) is interpreted as new information added to the previous assertions. Hence, there arises a question as to whether those copular elements contribute to focus interpretations of them. In the generative literature, controversy exists over the syntactic status of *da* and *shi*; some researchers have considered them verbal elements (e.g. Kizu 2005 for Japanese; Paul and Whitman 2008 for Mandarin) and others have considered that they are functional elements in focal contexts (e.g. Hiraiwa and Ishihara 2002, 2012; Kuwabara 2013 for Japanese; Liejiong 2003; Soh 2007 for Mandarin). Given this controversy, our analysis of the special answer forms with these copulas supports the latter, the functional camp, by demonstrating that these forms involve an elided structure licensed by *da* and *shi* that are functional heads (cf. Lobeck 1995).

This paper is organized as follows: Section 2 introduces verb-echo answers (VEA) in Japanese and Mandarin and provides Holmberg's (2016) analysis of the phenomenon. We also observe that contexts with narrow foci disallow these forms, and that the special forms *sou desu* and *shi de* are preferred instead. Section 3 illustrates how *sou desu* / *shi de* are derived as ellipsis constructions, supporting the view of the copulas therein as focus heads (Rizzi 1997). Section 4 extends our analysis to the stripping construction, and it is claimed that the construction in those two languages involves a hidden structure. Finally, Section 5 concludes this paper.

2 VEA and narrow focus

2.1 VEA as the focusing of polarity

Let us first discuss VEA. In neutral polar questions, as in (3), VEA are used as responses to the questions:

(3) a. A: *tabako-o*   *sui-mas-u*   *ka?*   [Japanese]
         cigarette-ACC smoke-HON-PRS   Q
    B: *sui-mas-u*   *yo*.
        smoke-HON-PRS   PRT
   b. A: *nǐ*   *xī*   *yān*   *ma?*   [Mandarin]
         you   smoke   cigarette   Q
    B: *xī*.
       smoke
   'A: Do you smoke? B: Yes.'

The polar questions in (3aA) and (3bA) are neutral in the sense that the questioner is not biased with respect to the proposition in question. In both sentences, the questioner A asks the answerer B whether s/he smokes, without any expectation of his/her smoking, and in such a context, one may use a verb form to convey *yes(, I do)*, as in (3aB) and (3bB). Cross-linguistic research has been conducted on VEA since Holmberg's (2016) pioneering work. He proposes that ordinary answer forms such as *yes* or *no* involve focusing of a polarity feature [±Pol] and TP-level ellipsis. In addition, he extends his analysis to VEA: they undergo the same mechanism as *yes* or *no*, the only difference being that a focused polarity is realized as a verb in VEA instead of those answer particles. In Asian languages such as Japanese and Mandarin, VEA are also analyzed by those who are based on Holmberg's ellipsis analysis (e.g. Simpson 2015 for some Asian languages including Mandarin; Sato and Hayashi 2018 for Japanese). The structures of (3aA, B) in this line of analysis are illustrated in (4a. b).[3]

    Holmberg (2016) assumes that the function of a polar question is focusing of the truth of the proposition (i.e. *p* or not *p*) in the sense that a polarity feature in polar questions functions as a variable to be bound by its higher copy, as with a *wh*-question or a declarative focus sentence (cf. Chomsky 1976). The structure in (4a) shows that an unspecified polarity feature [±Pol] in PolP moves to Foc(us)P. In the answer, as in (4b), a specified Pol (e.g. [+]Pol) that is externally merged in FocP triggers the valuation of (or the

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[3] The structures in (4a, b) are slightly different from Holmberg's assumption in two respect: (i) the position of PolP and (ii) the positing of FocP in the question form. However, these differences are irrelevant to our discussion.

agreement with) the unspecified Pol feature, which turns the unspecified value into the one identical to the higher counterpart (i.e. [+]Pol). In Japanese, the Pol feature in FocP that has no phonological matrix triggers the movement of V along with a tense morpheme in order to be pronounced. Finally, the TPs between the question (4a) and the answer (4b) are identical (i.e. *e-Giveness* in Merchant 2001), and thereby the ellipsis of the TP in (4b) correctly takes place. Hence comes the VEA *suimasu (yo)*.[4]

(4) a. Question   b. VEA
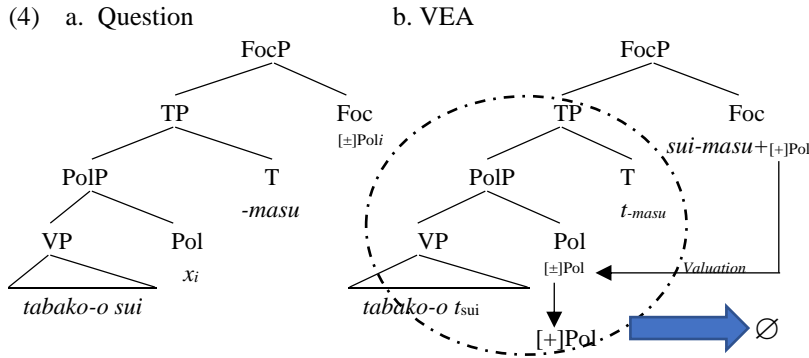
2.2. Narrow focus and *sou desu / shi de*

Holmberg (2016: 216) observes that Finnish is a language that exhibits VEA; however, this language disallows them as responses to narrow-focus polar questions, as in (5):

(5) A: *kahvia-ko Marja   haluaa?*   [Finnish]
         coffee-Q   Marja   wants?
     B_1: * *Haluaa.*   (VEA)
         wants
     B_2: *Kyllä.*   (affirmative particle)
         yes
         'A: It is coffee that Marja/Mari wants? B: Yes.'

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[4] One may cast doubt on whether VEA in Japanese and Mandarin undergo ellipsis, because they are well known as *pro*-drop languages (see Hoji 1998 for his argument against VP-ellipsis approach to the null argument construction in Japanese). In the *pro*-drop analysis, we would assume the VEA in (3a), repeated here as (ia) to have the structure depicted in (ib):

(i) a. *sui-mas-u yo*.
     b. [$_{CP}$ [$_{TP}$ *pro*$_{watasi-wa}$ [$_{vP}$ *pro*$_{tabako-o}$ *sui*] *mas-u*] *yo*]

However, Sato and Hayashi (2018) argue against the *pro*-drop analysis for VEA because it does not account for the behavior in Japanese VEA, such as adverbial recoverability and successful licensing of the indefinite third-person singular subject (i.e. *dareka* 'someone').

Similar observations can be made in Japanese and Mandarin. VEA in these languages cannot be used to respond to narrow-focus questions, either. Interestingly, *sou desu* (6) and *shi de* (7), which contain copulas *da* and *shi*, respectively, can instead be used in such contexts.[5]

(6) A: (*asagohan dewanaku*) BANGOHAN-*o* *tabe-ru* **no** **desu** *ka?*
       breakfast rather than dinner-ACC eat-PRS GEN COP Q
    B₁: * *tabe-mas-u* *yo.*
           eat-HON-PRS   PRT
    B₂: ***sou desu***.
(7) A: *nǐ* (*búshì* *zǎofàn,*) *chī* WǍNFÀN *ma?*
       you not.COP breakfast eat   dinner   Q
    B₁: * *chī.*
           eat
    B₂: ***shì de***.
           'A: Are you going to eat dinner, not breakfast? B₂: Yes.'

The following context renders these dialogs appropriate: in the morning, Speaker A sees that Speaker B is ready to eat something. However, A finds a steak on the table, a meal from last night; thus A asks B (6A) / (7A) to confirm whether B is really eating a steak in the morning. More specifically, A presupposes that B is going to eat something from B's behavior, and what A wants to know is whether it is dinner that B is going to eat. Thus, this polar question involves a narrow focus on *dinner*, as indicated by capitals in (6) and (7), and the special answer forms *sou desu* / *shi de* are preferred here.

In the context of a neutral polar question, *sou desu* / *shi de* are disallowed, but VEA are allowed:

(8) A: *Ohayougozaimasu.* *asagohan(-wa)* *tabe-mas-ita* *ka?*
       Good morning   breakfast-(TOP)   eat-HON-PST Q
    B₁: *tabe-mas-ita* *yo.*
          eat-HON-PST   PRT
    B₂: * ***sou desu***.
(9) A: *zǎoshànghǎo.* *nǐ* *chī* *zǎofàn* *le* *ma?*
       Good morning   you eat   breakfast EXP   Q
    B₁: *chī-le.*
          eat-EXP
    B₂: * ***shì de***.
          'A: Good morning! Have you eaten breakfast? B: Yes.'

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[5] Simpson (2015) and Sato and Hayashi (2018) provide similar observations with respect to *focus intervention effects*, but they do not discuss *shi de* and *sou desu*.

These facts indicate that VEA and *sou desu* / *shi de* exhibit complementary distribution with respect to the presence of narrow focus. In other words, while VEA are felicitous in conveying that a relevant proposition is true, as in (8B₁) and (9 B₁), *sou desu* and *shi de* are licit only in narrow-focus contexts as in (6) and (7). This, in fact, implies that these special forms require a questioner's expectation with respect to the proposition involved, and thus should be better paraphrased as 'what you expect is correct' rather than 'yes'.

Note that the narrow-focus polar question Japanese in (6) contains the *no da* (*desu*) construction. In fact, it has been often analyzed as a focus-inducing phenomenon (e.g. Hiraiwa and Ishihara 2002, 2012). In order to regard *no da* as a hallmark of narrow focusing, let us take a brief look at the *why*-question in Japanese in (10). It has been reported (e.g. Kuwabara 2013 and references cited therein) that the *wh*-adjunct *naze* 'why' strongly prefers attaching *no da* (*desu*).

(10) a. ?? *Hanako-wa naze hon-o yomi-mas-ita ka?*
      Hanako-TOP why book-ACC read-HON-PST Q
   b. *Hanako-wa naze hon-o yon-da **no desu** ka?*
      Hanako-TOP why book-ACC read-PST GEN COP Q
      'Why did Hanako read the book?'

In addition, Tomioka (2009) points out that the *naze*-phrase behaves differently from other *wh*-elements in being insusceptible to intervention effects, and he attributes this special behavior of *naze* to its presuppositional property (see Tomioka (2009) for detailed discussion). For example, the licit *naze* question in (10b) requires the presupposition that Hanako read the book, thus it cannot be denied. Moreover, this corresponds to the non-*wh* portion of this sentence. Let us understand this presuppositional function of *naze* as establishing a focus–presupposition configuration (i.e. *naze* 'why' vs. the other parts of a sentence). Given that this type of question requires *no da* particles, as exemplified in (10a, b), it is reasonable to assume that the *no da* construction is a manifestation of narrow focusing in Japanese.

It should be pointed out that there is a formal difference between Japanese and Mandarin in expressing a narrow-focus question. Comparing (6A) and (8A), it turns out that a narrow-focus question is realized with *no da* particles in Japanese. By contrast, such a formal distinction is not observed in Mandarin, as shown by the comparison of (7A) and (9a): the presence of narrow focus is not reflected morphologically in this language. Nevertheless, we assume that questions like (7A) involve narrow-focusing as do Japanese counterparts like (6A) (i.e. the *no da* construction).

2.3 Another functional difference between VEA and *sou desu* / *shi de*

There is a further difference between VEA and *sou desu* / *shi de*: in the context of negative questions, VEA must morphologically express the polarity of the sentence. Observe:

(11) A: *Taro-wa*   *maiasa*   *asagohan-o*   *tabe-mas-en ka?*
           Taro-TOP   every morning   breakfast-ACC   eat-HON-NEG   Q
       B$_1$:   *tabe-mas-u*   *yo.*
            eat-HON-PRS   PRT
       B$_2$:   *tabe-mas-**en***   *yo.*
            eat-HON-NEG   PRT

(12) A$_1$:   *Taro*   *měitiānzǎoshàng*   *dōu*   ***bù***   *chī*   *zǎofàn*   *ma*?
            Taro   every morning   all   NEG   eat   breakfast   Q
       B$_1$:   *chī.*
            eat
       B$_2$:   ***bù***   *chī.*
            NEG   eat
            'A: Does Taro not eat breakfast every morning?'
            'B$_1$: You're wrong, he *does* eat breakfast every morning.'
            'B$_2$: No, he doesn't eat breakfast every morning.'

In (11), for example, to affirm the preceding polar question with negation in (11A), the VEA without the negative morpheme *-en* (i.e. *tabemasu yo*) is used, as in (11B$_1$). By contrast, the negated VEA in (11B$_2$) (i.e. *tabemasen yo*) necessarily conveys the answerer's negative belief that he doesn't eat breakfast every morning. Let us examine *sou desu* and *shi de* in a similar vein. Recall that they are felicitous as a response to a narrow-focus question, a sentence with *no da* particles in Japanese (cf. (6)). With this in mind, let us observe (13) and (14) for Japanese and Mandarin, respectively:

(13) A: *Taro-wa*   *(asagohan dewanaku)*   *BANGOHAN-o*
           Taro-TOP   (breakfast   rather than)   dinner-ACC
           *tabe-**nakat**-ta*   ***no***   ***desu***   *ka?*
           eat-NEG-PST   GEN   COP   Q
       B: ***sou desu***.

(14) A: *Taro*   ***méi***   *chīde*   *(búshì*   *zǎofàn,)*   *shì*   *WǍNFÀNma?*
           Taro   NEG-PST   eat-PST   not.COP   breakfast   COP   dinner   Q
       B: ***shì de***.
           Lit. 'A: Did Taro not eat dinner, rather than breakfast?'
           Intended. 'B: 'He didn't eat dinner, as you expected.'

The examples in (13) and (14) show that unlike the VEA in (11) and (12), *sou desu* and *shi de* serve as an confirmation of the truth of the negated proposition: although they are not attached by any negative markers (e.g. *-en* or *bù*), they successfully express the negation of the proposition. The comparison of VEA and these forms allows us to posit that VEA is an expression involved in the *polarity-based* system (Jones 1999: 8-14), an answering system attested in English, whereas *sou desu* / *shi de* are in the *agree/disagree* system (e.g. Kuno 1973; Holmberg 2016: 140-141) in that their function is to agree with a questioner's expectation that is based on his/her presuppositional knowledge.

2.4 Another use of *sou desu* / *shi de*: Nominal predication questions

We have observed above that *sou desu* and *shi de* are felicitous in responding to a narrow-focus question, affirmative or negative. Moreover, they can be used to respond to a non-biased question such as nominal predication, as in (15) and (16). Additionally, echoing a predicate, as in (15B$_2$) and (16B$_2$), is also licit:

(15)	A:	Taro-*wa*	*gakusei*	***desu***	*ka?*		[Japanese]
		Taro-TOP	student	COP	Q		
	B$_1$:	***sou desu***.					
	B$_2$:	*gakusei desu.*					
(16)	A:	*Taro*	***shì***	*xuéshēng*		*ma?*	[Mandarin]
		Taro	COP	student		Q	
	B$_1$:	***shì de***.					
	B$_2$:	*shì xuéshēng.*					
		'Is Taro a student? B: Yes(, he is a student).'					

If *sou desu* and *shi de* served only as agreeing with the questioner's expectation, the use in (15B$_1$) and (16B$_1$) would be mysterious because the questions in these examples are arguably not narrow-focused, as shown by the lack of *no da* sequence in (15A): the questioner can utter (15A) / (16A) without his/her knowledge about Taro's occupation. This indicates that this usage is differentiated from what we have seen in narrow-focus polar questions. In the following subsection, we propose that those two types of functions are regarded as an indication that the copulas *da* (*desu*) and *shi* are ambiguous in categorial status.

2.5 Interim summary

In summary, our observations on the question–answer parings in Japanese and Mandarin are illustrated in the table in (17):[6]

(17)

Japanese	SFQ	NFQ	NPQ
Question	∅	*no desu*	*desu*
Answer	VEA	*sou desu*	*sou desu* /echo
Mandarin	SFQ	NFQ	NPQ
Question	∅	∅	*shì*
Answer	VEA	*shì de*	*shì de* / echo

Our findings on *sou desu* / *shi de* are two folds: (i) when responding to a narrow-focus question, they express the answerer's agreement with the questioner's expectation based on the presupposition, paraphrased as 'what you expected is correct'; (ii) when responding to a nominal-predication question, which is not necessarily narrowly focused, they merely convey 'yes'.

Here arises a question: are those functions two sides of the same coin? In what follows, the behavior discussed above is, we will argue, accounted for by extending Holmberg's (2016) analysis of a polar question and its answer to a narrow-focus polar question, thereby supporting the view that the copulas *da* (*desu*) and *shi* are functional categories, as well as lexical.

3   Analysis

Let us first investigate how *sou desu* and *shi de* are yielded in narrow-focus contexts. Before that, we must briefly review the case of VEA. In Section 2.1, we have developed the structure of VEA, reproduced in (18). The point is that TPs with an unspecified Pol feature are identical, hence comes TP-ellipsis (see *e-Giveness* in Merchant 2001 *et seq*.). The fact that VEA are dedicated to neutral polar questions would be derived from the non-specification of a Pol feature: since the Pol feature is a variable and thus is unspecified, the proposition associated with it is interpreted as neither true nor false.

(18) VEA (reproduced from (4))
Question: [ForceP Q [FocP [±]Pol$_i$ [TP Subj [PolP x_i [$_{vP}$ t_{Subj} v [VP V]]]]]]
Answer: [ForceP [FocP V+[+]Pol [TP Subj [PolP [±]Pol [$_{vP}$ t_{Subj} v [VP t_V]]]]]]
Valuation   [+]Pol

Bearing this assumption in mind, let us then consider a narrow-focus polar question. If the unspecified Pol feature (i.e. [±]Pol) yields a neutral polar question, we can reasonably further assume that a narrow-focus polar question includes a specified Pol feature (i.e. [+]Pol or [−]Pol), because the questioner in this type of question knows that the proposition itself is true or false (cf. (13) and (14)). In addition, we adopt Rizzi's (1997) view, according to which a focus-presupposition configuration is determined by the activation of FocP in the C-domain. Recall that what is associated with FocP is a (unspecified) Pol feature in a neutral polar question; in a narrow-focus polar question, we propose that elements such as arguments or adjuncts, instead of polarity, are focalized by the FocP. In (6), for example, it is *bangohan* 'dinner' that is associated (more technically *Agree*s) with the FocP, whose head is realized as *da* (*desu*) in Japanese (Hiraiwa and Ishihara's 2002, 2012; Kuwabara 2013) and perhaps as a null form in Mandarin. The structures of (6) can be represented in (19).
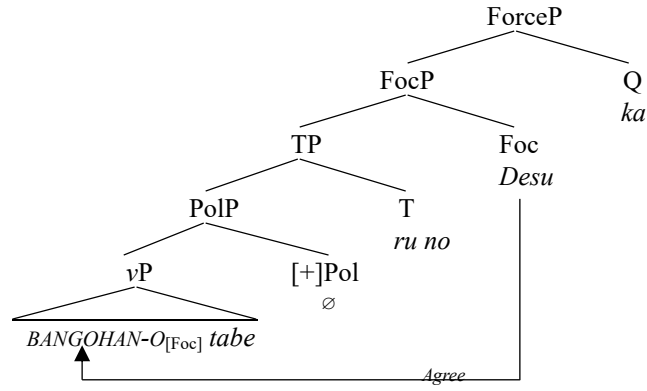
In (19a), the Foc head *desu* seeks its counterpart in the TP-domain (here *bangohan-o* 'dinner') and agrees with (or values) it. Given that a narrow-focus polar question involves a questioner's knowledge about the truth of a relevant proposition, the value of PolP in (19a) is thus analyzed as specified as [+]Pol. Then, a Q feature located in ForceP scopes over the whole structure, resulting in a polar question interpretation with narrow focus. In the answer in (19b), the TP is identical to that in question (19a), hence TP-ellipsis takes place. Here we further propose that the elided TP in (19b) must not be null for morphological reasons, perhaps due to *da* (*desu*)'s bound-morpheme nature. Thus, a propositional anaphor *sou* or *de* is inserted at PF, yielding *sou desu / shi de*.

This analysis straightforwardly accounts for the agree–disagree nature of *sou desu /shi de*. In (13) and (14), we have observed that these forms can be used to respond to a negative polar question by conveying 'what you expected is correct'. This agreement function, we argue, stems from the assumption that *sou desu / shi de* and their questions necessarily have the same Pol value. In negative contexts in (13) and (14), for example, the values of the questions and these answers must be specified as [−]Pol; otherwise, ellipsis cannot take place, an operation yielding these answer forms. In other words, the felicity of the answers entails that the values of Pol feature are identical, hence comes their agreement function.[7]
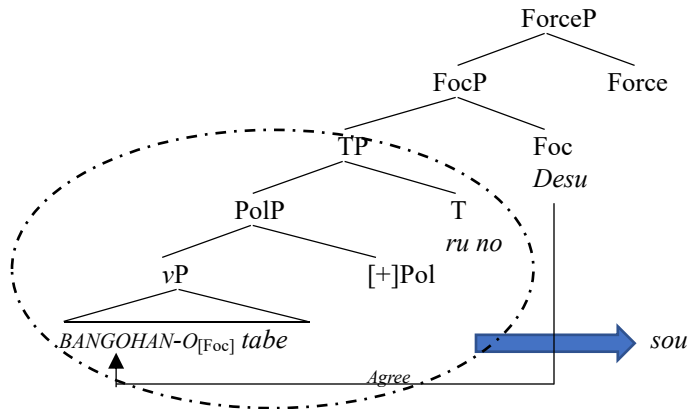
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[7] Unfortunately, we have to omit the relevant structure for space. The structures for (13) and (14) are readily represented if the values of Pol in (19a, b) are turned into [−Pol].

(19) *sou desu / shi de* for narrow questions[8] (order irrelevant)
  a. *Question* (for (6A))

ForceP
FocP — Q *ka*
TP — Foc *Desu*
PolP — T *ru no*
vP — [+]Pol ∅
BANGOHAN-O_[Foc] *tabe*
Agree

  b. *Answer* (*sou desu / shi de* (for (6B$_2$)))

ForceP
FocP — Force
TP — Foc *Desu*
PolP — T *ru no*
vP — [+]Pol
BANGOHAN-O_[Foc] *tabe*
Agree
sou

Let us then discuss *sou desu* and *shi de* in nominal predication, as in (15) and (16). We propose that in this case, these forms are a kind of VEA whose lexical verb is the copula *da* (*desu*) or *shi*. Therefore, the derivation is the same as the VEA in (4) or (18), except that morphological supporter *sou* or *de* is inserted, on a par with (19b). The structure of (15) is illustrated in (20):

(20) Nominal-predication questions
  a. *Question*
    [$_{ForceP}$ Q [$_{FocP}$ [±]Pol$_i$ [$_{TP}$ Subj [$_{PolP}$ x_i [$_{vP}$ t_{Subj} v [$_{VP}$ *desu / shi* NP]]]]]]

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[8] According to Hiraiwa and Ishihara (2002, 2012), *no da* is decomposed into a Fin head and a Foc head. We assume that *shi de* is resolved in the same manner. Fin heads in the structures in (19) are omitted for space, and we attach *no* to a tense morpheme instead.

b. *Answer*

[ForceP[FocP *desu / shi*+[+]Pol[TP Subj [PolP [±]Pol [vP *t*Subj*v* [VP *t*V NP]]]]]]

Valuation ▲ ▼[+]Pol

If our ellipsis analyses of answer forms are correct, it follows that both *da* (*desu*) and *shi* can be identified either as a Foc head that may license ellipsis or a lexical verb.

Now, we provide a piece of evidence for the categorial demarcation of the copulas. In the nominal-predication question with narrow focus, *sou desu / shi de* are still felicitous. However, two readings arise: one is to convey 'what you expected is correct', that is the agreement of a questioner's expectation; the other is to affirm the proposition involved in a question. Observe:

(21) A: | *Taro-wa* | *gakusei* | *de(-wa)* | *nai* | *(no)* | *desu* | *ka?* |
| | Taro-TOP | student | COP(-TOP) | NEG | GEN | COP | Q |

Lit. 'Is it not a student that Taro is?'

B₁: *sou desu.* (intended: 'No, he isn't, as you expected.')

B₂: ??*(iya,) sou desu.* (intended: 'You're wrong, he *is* a student.')

(22) A: | *Taro* | *búshì* | *xuéshēng* | *ma?* |
| | Taro | NEG-COP | student | Q |

Lit. 'Is it not a student that Taro is?'

B₁: *shì de.* (intended: 'No, he isn't, as you expected.')

B₂: ??*(bú) shì de.* (intended: 'You're wrong, he *is* a student.')

These answers may either convey 'no, he isn't a student, as you expected, as in (21B₁) / (22B₁), or 'you're wrong, he *is* a student', as in (21B₂) / (22B₂). In our account, the former corresponds to the answer to a narrow-focus question, thus involve a Foc head, whereas the latter are VEA, as they affirm the proposition that Taro is a student. Although the latter reading strongly requires negative particles such as *iya* and *bú*, perhaps due to the interpretive disambiguation, the ambiguity observed in (21) and (22) lends support to the view that the copulas *da* (*desu*) and *shi* should be distinguished with respect to their categorial status.

4   A note: Extension to stripping

Finally, we briefly discuss another focus-inducing construction with the copulas *da* (*desu*) / *shi*, dubbed *stripping*. In fact, it has been claimed that in Japanese and Mandarin, this construction is an elliptical phenomenon, which would have an articulated hidden structure (e.g. Shimada 2004; Todokoro 2009 for Japanese; Llejiong 2003; Soh 2007 for Mandarin). In our analysis developed here, it is implied that those copulas are ellipsis licensors due to

its functional nature (in line with Lobeck 1995). Hence, it is theoretically reasonable to extend our ellipsis analysis of *sou desu* and *shi de* to the stripping construction, because it requires the copula *da* (*desu*) and *shi*, respectively. Some properties of the construction that is compatible with our ellipsis analysis are as follows. First, the value of polarity must be identical between a stripping sentence and its antecedent clause (see also Soh (2007)):

(23) A: *Taro-wa*   *Hanako-o*   *sonkei*   *si-tei-ru.*   [Japanese]
         Taro-TOP   Hanako-ACC   respect   do-PRG-PRS
     B: *Bill-mo*   *desu.*
(24) A: *Taro*   *zūnjìng*   *Hanako.*   [Mandarin]
         Taro   respect   Hanako
     B: *Bill yě*   *shì.*
         Bill also   COP
         'A: Taro respects Hanako. B: Bill does, too.'
(25) A: *Taro-wa*   *Hanako-o*   *sonkei*   *si-tei-na-i.*   [Japanese]
         Taro-TOP   Hanako-ACC   respect   do-PRG-NEG-PRS
     B: *Bill-mo*   *desu.*
(26) A: *Taro bù*   *zūnjìng*   *Hanako.*   [Mandarin]
         Taro NEG   respect   Hanako
     B: *Mary yě*   *shì.*
         'A: Taro does not respect Hanako. B: Bill doesn't, either.'

The sentence in (25) / (26) is particular striking: unlike the English translation shown above, the stripping sentences in (25B) and (26B) express the negated proposition despite the lack of negative morphemes. The comparison of (23) / (24) and (25) / (26) thus suggests that the stripping construction exhibits the identicality of polarity between it and the antecedent, a characteristic observed in *sou desu* / *shi de*. In fact, it follows from this that the elided domain of the stripping construction should be at least larger than PolP.

Second, the following behavior of stripping, namely (i) the availability of bound variable readings (= (27), (28)) and (ii) the recoverability of adverbial interpretations (= (29), (30)), conforms to an ellipsis account. Observe:

(27) A: *Subete-no Nihonjin-huuhu$_i$-ga* otagai$_i$-*o*   *sonkei* *sitei-ru.*
         All-GEN   Japanese-couple   each other   respect do -PRS
     B: *Subete-no* *Amerikajin-huuhu-mo*   *da.*
         All-GEN   Japanese-couple-also   COP
                                          (adapted from Shimada 2004: 132)
(28) A: *Rìběnrén*   *fūfù$_i$*   *dōu*   *hùxiāng$_i$*   *zūnjìng.*
         Japanese   couple   all   each other   respect
     B: *Měiguórén fūfù*   *yě*   *dōu*   *shì.*

        American   couple   also   all   COP

        'A: All Japanese couples respect each other.'

        'B: All American couples do <respect each other>, too.'

(29) A: *Taro-wa*   *matigatte*   *sake-o*   *non-da.*

           Taro-TOP   mistakenly   alcohol-ACC   drink-PST

      B: *Hanako-mo*   *da.*   (adapted from Shimada 2004: 137)

           Hanako-also   COP

(30) A: *Taro* *cuò*   *hēle*   *jiŭ*

           Taro   mistakenly   drink-PST   alcohol

      B: *Hanako*   *yě*   *shì.*

           Hanako   also   COP

           'A: Taro mistakenly drank alcohol.'

           'B: Hanako did <mistakenly drank alcohol>, too.'

These properties are often discussed in VP-ellipsis in English, a construction convincingly regarded as having a hidden LF-structure (cf. Hoji 1998). Hence, such parallelism with the English VP-ellipsis indicates that the stripping construction in Japanese and Mandarin *is* an ellipsis phenomenon. However, the detailed syntactic mechanism yielding stripping remains to be elucidated; specifically, its interaction with the additive focus particles *mo* and *yě* 'also' (cf. Craenenbroek and Lipták 2013). This is left for future research.

5   Conclusion

In this paper, we have discussed the function of the copulas *da* and *shi* in Japanese and Mandarin, respectively, particularly dealing with the special answer forms *sou desu* and *shi de*. Based on Holmberg's (2016) work, we have argued that they are best analyzed as TP ellipsis licensed by *da* (*desu*) and *shi*. Thus, our analysis of these answer forms lends support to the cartographic view of *da* as a focus head (Hiraiwa and Ishihara 2002, 2012) by extending it to ellipsis phenomena. We have also briefly extended our ellipsis account to the stripping construction, demonstrating that it exhibits properties illustrating an ellipsis operation and suggesting that the functional (Focus) nature of these copulas should be explored from the perspective of ellipsis.

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