Personal Pronouns
in English and Japanese:
A Preliminary Comparison

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Introduction

This paper is a preliminary comparison of personal pronouns in English and Japanese. In this, I will draw on a number of studies of Japanese and on my own study of the personal pronouns in English and other Germanic languages (Howe 1996).

The paper complements a recent presentation on irregularity in pronouns (Howe 2009) and publication in press on pronoun morphology (Howe, in press) and will be followed by three further working papers on English and Japanese: on reanalysis and sources of new pronoun forms (Howe forthcoming a), on reference and ellipsis (forthcoming b), and on pronouns and politeness (forthcoming c).

These preliminary papers will focus on the core pronouns rather than the myriad possible pronoun or pronoun-like forms in Japanese, as well as other forms of reference in both English and Japanese. However, other and variant forms will indeed be discussed where relevant.

The first question to be asked in a study such as this is of course

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whether Japanese actually has personal pronouns in the sense of English and other European languages. Many Japanese specialists, for instance Suzuki (1978, see e.g. p.112), do not treat pronouns as a separate class. Smith terms them 'personal referents' and goes as far as saying that a 'characteristic of the language is the absence in Japanese of anything *remotely resembling* the personal pronoun' (1983: 74, my emphasis). Takeuchi (1999: 1) refers to forms such as *watakusi, watasi, boku* and *zibun*[1] as 'nouns of self-reference', stating (1999: 64) that 'morphologically, they do not form regular paradigms'. Hinds (1986: 238) states that 'The primary problem is that, from a historical perspective, the group of words which is typically thought of as being pronouns, have nominal origins.' Similarly, on forms such as *watasi, anata, kare* and *kanozyo*, Shibatani (1990: 371-2) writes that while they 'are usually identified as personal pronouns, they are characteristically different from the personal pronouns in European languages'. Like Hinds, he states that etymologically most of the forms derive 'from regular nouns', citing *watakusi* from 'private (thing)', *kimi* from 'emperor' and *anata* from 'yonder'.

There may be other differences, too: the Japanese forms can be preceded by a demonstrative pronoun as in *sono kanozyo* (Hinds 1986: 243-244) and Japanese has a considerably greater degree of ellipsis of referents. However, as will be discussed in Howe (forthcoming b), ellipsis of referents also occurs to a significant extent in English. And some modification of and by pronouns is also possible, for example *silly me, poor you, he-man, she-devil, us girls, a them-and-us attitude* and non-standard *them*

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[1] In this paper, unless quotations, I have generally standardized Japanese transcriptions of pronoun forms.

books. See also the examples of pronouns used as nouns (such as 'That's *the old me* — I'm different now') further below.

In Suzuki's (1978: 115 & 124) view, Japanese 'personal pronouns' should be classified together with kinship and position terms into categories of words used by the speaker to refer to him/herself and to the addressee, namely into 'terms of self-reference' and 'address terms'. He states that these categories will not be dominated by pronominal forms. Words referring to others should, he suggests, be labelled 'terms of reference'.

If we now turn to English, even a casual glance at the personal pronouns reveals that they are hardly morphologically regular, and in this sense do not form a regular paradigm — they are frequently suppletive (see Howe 1996 and in press). Pronoun origins will be discussed in a following paper; however, we can state already here that some personal pronouns in European languages derive from non-pronoun forms (such as titles) and from demonstratives, so etymology and lack of morphological regularity are not in themselves sufficient reasons to define Japanese pronouns differently.

Further, it is important to point out that the traditional label 'personal pronoun' is not ideal for English either. Grammatically, we can state that personal pronouns function like noun phrases rather than nouns, and reference is not always to a person, or straightforwardly to a grammatical person, as even a few simple examples can illustrate:

It's raining.

Doing absolutely nothing is fun. I love *it.*

I tried a couple of new beers at *The Three Kings. They* were good.

You, Olivia and I are going to be busy today. *We*'re going to clean up

this mess.

Alternatively, Radford (2004: 44-47, 143f.) states that 'the "standard" analysis of personal pronouns over the past three decades' is as determiners, though this is not without problems. However, he retains the traditional terminology because 'a number of the aspects of the syntax of pronouns remain to be clarified and because the category pronoun is familiar from centuries of grammatical tradition'.

In fact, in English and other European languages defining personal pronoun use is not straightforward either: demonstratives, reflexive pronouns and titles can all occur in place of personal pronouns.

Reference of the personal pronouns in English and Japanese will be discussed in a later paper. However, Quirk et al. (1985: 347) state for English that:

'The 1st person and 2nd person pronouns, when they have specific reference, are used to refer to those directly involved in the discourse situation: *viz* the speaker(s)/writer(s) and the addressee(s) ... The 3rd person pronouns may also be used situationally, to refer to some person(s) or thing(s) whose identity can be inferred from the extralinguistic context' or 'the identity of the referents of 3rd person pronouns is supplied by the linguistic context.'

In these terms at least — referring to the speaker(s)/writer(s), addressee(s), or other person(s) or thing(s) — Japanese forms such as *watasi, anata, kare* and *kanozyo* are comparable to English pronouns.

Hinds (1986: 238) offers the following definition of personal pronouns

in Japanese:

> 'Personal pronouns in Japanese are single lexical items, and are variable and contained in a reference to some circumstance found outside the linguistic expression itself.'

The grammatical-lexical duality of personal pronouns will be discussed later in this paper.

Referring to Jespersen (1924), Hinds (1986: 238) also states that whereas the class of pronouns in many languages is traditionally assumed to be small, in Japanese this 'class' is large. According to Miller (1967: 341, quoted in Smith 1983: 77), 'Japanese has historically used an enormous variety of words to refer to speaker, persons spoken to, and persons spoken of ... Japanese has this enormous lexicon of "personal pronouns" because it never really had any "personal pronouns" at all.'

Quirk et al. (1985: 335) define (English) pronouns as a 'varied class of closed-class words with nominal function'. We will look at closed-classness in a later paper, but can state already here that new pronouns can be and indeed have been added to this 'closed class', even in English, and certainly pronouns can be lost from this class. We should rather state that the class of pronouns in many languages — indeed function words in general — is comparatively *stable*, i.e. forms can be added or lost, but significantly less often than is the case for lexical or content words (see Howe 1996: 100-104, Quirk et al. 1985: 71f.).

Where English and Japanese clearly differ is in the extent personal pronouns are used. Suzuki (1978: 114f.) makes a point that although

Japanese has more personal pronouns than English, they are used less. This will be discussed further in Howe (forthcoming b) on ellipsis and (forthcoming c) on politeness. The number of forms must also be qualified: where Japanese has various pronouns for hierarchy and formality, English, particularly earlier stages, had several forms for number and case, only some of which survive. Counting nominative, accusative, dative and genitive case forms, and singular, dual and plural number, but excluding the many variants, one could state that Old English had around 36 personal pronouns (see e.g. the paradigms in Howe 1996: 131-133).

Here, then, we will not enter further into a debate of whether or not we define *watasi, anata, kare, kanozyo* and so on as 'personal pronouns'. An important task is to examine how proforms in English and Japanese (and of course other languages) are similar as well as how they differ. Although Japanese and English words for 'I', 'you', 'he', 'she' and so on indeed differ in some respects, these differences help to reveal taken-for-granted assumptions about one's own language and languages with which one is familiar — a common pitfall when examining languages or language groups in isolation, especially for those brought up on 'Standard Average European grammar' (cf. Tomasello 2003: 18). Thus, even if there are significant differences between English and Japanese, this does not mean that comparison is pointless, in fact quite the contrary.

Regarding what is similar, we can state that it is very likely a property of all natural languages that they possess devices for referring to entities mentioned elsewhere in or involved in the discourse (cf. Radford 1988: 78) — i.e. that proforms of some kind are *universal*.

As in Howe (1996), my approach in this and the subsequent papers will

be not to view the pronouns in isolation, but to examine them within the language in which they are spoken. Thus, the papers focus on rather than isolate the pronouns in language, and do not exclude phonological, syntactic, pragmatic and other factors, indeed it would be impossible to do so.

　　Tables 1 and 2 show personal pronouns in English and Japanese respectively. The grammatical and semantic differences between English and Japanese and consequently many of the pronoun distinctions are reflected in the difficulty of comparing like for like simply in two tables. As mentioned above, Japanese has many possible forms, though individual speakers use only a subset of these. In English, too, some regional speakers retain the *thou, thee, thine, thy* pronouns, but the majority of speakers do not. In this preliminary examination, I will focus only on the most common pronouns. For other forms, see the references in the bibliography.

Table 1: Personal pronouns in English

I	me	mine
we	us	ours
you		yours
he	him	his
she	her	hers
it		its
they	them	theirs

in mind when referring to the schematic diagram of Japanese forms in Table 2. Reference and ellipsis and pronouns and politeness － in Japanese and English － will be discussed in greater detail in two subsequent papers.

Grammatical-lexical duality

The English personal pronouns are function words. This means that, like *a, the, be, that, on* and Japanese *ga, o* and *no* for example, they have grammatical function. Function words differ considerably from lexical words in connected speech － compare Gimson/Ramsaran (1989: 265f.) on English: 'Content words ... generally have in connected speech the qualitative pattern of their isolate form and therefore retain some measure of qualitative prominence even when no pitch prominence is associated with them and when they are relatively unstressed.' Many function (or 'grammatical' or 'form') words, on the other hand, have 'two or more qualitative and quantitative patterns according to whether they are unaccented (as is usual) or accented'.

As Gimson/Ramsaran (1989: 261) point out, function words in English such as the personal pronouns, articles and auxiliary verbs are likely to be unaccented, although they may be accented if the meaning requires it. Although usually written in their orthotone form, the personal pronouns in English are mostly unaccented in normal connected speech. For example, Gimson/Ramsaran (1989: 26) state that *his, her, we* and *them* have over 90% occurrences as unaccented.[2]

On connected speech and function words in Japanese, see Shibatani

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[2]　The independent genitive/possessives *mine, yours, ours* etc., which are outside the main focus of this paper, are always accented (Quirk et al. 1985: 362). Here, 'accent' is

(1990: 175-177) and Tsujimura (2007: 92-94).

The important difference between personal pronouns and similar function words in English and lexical or content words is immediately apparent in a comparison of the personal pronouns with (partially) homophonic lexical words:

Table 3: Lexical words in English (partially) homophonic with pronouns

eye[3]		mine
yew	ewe	yaws
wee[4]		hours
	hymn	

The difference is similarly apparent when personal pronouns are used as nouns in examples such as 'Is it a *he* or a *she*?', 'You're *it*' (in children's games), 'The diet to create a new *you*' and 'The real *me*'.

Examples of lexicalized pronouns in English are *thou* (*thee, thine, thy*) and *ye* in most English speakers (i.e. this must be distinguished from the

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used as in Gimson/Ramsaran (1989) where 'variations of pitch, length, stress, and quality, contribute to the manifestation of the accented parts of connected speech' (1989: 262). As in Howe (1996), generally accent variants in the personal pronouns will be referred to as accented and unaccented where this is unambiguous, and by a convention +accent(ed) and -accent(ed), which represents greater-less accent(ed) (and not necessarily straightforwardly with/without or plus/minus accent). The variables + and - accent(ed) — i.e. relative rather than absolute terms — are very useful in cross-linguistic study where absolute dichotomous terms are sometimes less helpful. Note also that the use of accented-unaccented or + and - accent(ed) should not be taken to mean that there are necessarily only two accent variants.

[3] Noun or verb.

[4] Noun, verb or adjective.

minority of English speakers to whom these forms remain part of their pronoun system). For the majority of Present English speakers, *thou* (*thee, thine, thy*) and *ye* are not part of their usual pronoun system, though they are still known, and may be used, as pronouns. Significantly, however, they may lose the accent variation typical of personal pronouns in English, occurring only in their citation form. Forms such as *thou* (*thee, thine, thy*) and *ye* can therefore be said to have been lexicalized — although they retain the pronoun form, they resemble more lexical words than function words.

Note, too, that in the lexicalization of pronoun forms discussed here, the loss of accent variation characteristic of English personal pronouns and occurrence only of the citation form *mirrors* one of the processes cited by Hopper & Traugott (1993: 2f.) as typical of grammaticalization, namely phonological reduction (of auxiliaries) as in for example *going to* > *gonna*, or *will* > *'ll*.

In Japanese, we will maintain, the equivalent of English — accented pronouns is *zero* — i.e. where reference is clear, English speakers normally use a — accented form of the pronoun and Japanese usually makes no overt (co)reference. We could perhaps express this as minus accent and zero accent forms respectively. The reference of — accented pronouns in English — to given, anaphoric or indefinite referents or antecedents rather than new, focus, or contrastive reference — can perhaps be termed agreement and in other languages may be absent — as indeed we find in Japanese (cf. Howe 1996: 55, Tsujimura 2007: 254-57).

Viewed in this way, we can show in the 'over 90% occurrences' of many English personal pronouns as unaccented and in the common 'zero' pronouns of Japanese a parallel or equivalence.

Given that where reference is clear from context (text or situation) a pronoun will normally be −accented in English and in Japanese zero, it is not surprising that Japanese pronouns, when they do occur, occur mostly in orthotone form. According to Hinds (1986: 248), in Japanese 'There is no difference in segmental or suprasegmental structure of pronouns depending on whether the context is emphatic or unemphatic. Nor is there a difference in accentuation, tone variation, or vowel length.'

In summary, then, one could argue that in their frequent lexical origins and phonological characteristics the Japanese pronouns are closer to lexical forms than most English pronouns; indeed as already stated Hinds (1986: 238) labels them 'lexical items'.

However, if personal pronouns function to some degree as function words in Japanese, we could expect them to show reduction (synchronic or diachronic) as one characteristic, as in *dewa − zya* or reduction of for instance *wa* and *no* in connected speech. Recall the comments above on the *lexicalization* of English *thou* (*thee, thine, thy*) and *ye* and concomitant loss of accent variation. Here we should look for the reverse process, namely reduction as an indicator of *grammaticalization*.

And, indeed, we can find examples of reduction in Japanese pronouns. As discussed in Howe (in press), Makino and Tsutsui (1986/1989: 28-29) for example cite 'at least' six contracted forms of the 1st person singular, with decreasing formality:

Table 4: Reduction in Japanese pronouns

watakusi	very formal
atakusi	formal, female
watasi	formal
atasi	informal, female
wasi	informal, older male
assi	very informal, adult male, Tokyo Bay
atai	very informal/vulgar, female

Significantly, the most informal (and therefore least affected) forms are also the most reduced.

　　We could also perhaps add *'tasi* which, in the words of Hinds (1986: 248-49), 'typically occurs in sentence initial position in the relaxed speech of females':

　　'Tasi wa Okayama kara na no. Anata wa? Tôkyô?
　　I'm from Okayama. What about you? Tokyo?

　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　(Adapted from Hinds 1986: 249)

And in the 2nd person, we have (Hinds 1986: 248):

　　anata ＞ anta

Thus, some Japanese pronouns do show at least one characteristic of

grammaticalization.

Personal pronouns are generally (co)referring terms, grammatically as well as semantically to the external world — in their core meaning 'I' or 'watasi' = the speaker, 'we' or 'wareware' = the group to which 'I' belong, 'you' or 'anata' = the addressee(s), 'he' or 'kare' = the male person etc. — and therefore it is perhaps not surprising that they show similarities both with grammatical and lexical words. This *duality* is an important continuum of comparison between (in this paper) English and Japanese — although English pronouns are generally more grammatical, and Japanese pronouns more lexical, both share fundamental similarities in their proform nature.

This grammatical-lexical duality will be discussed further below on pronoun categories and properties.

Pronoun categories and properties[5]

As discussed in Howe (1996, chapter 2), (2009) and (in press), a fundamental factor in personal pronouns is the connection between category/property distinctions in the language outside the personal pronouns and those in the personal pronouns.

These categories/properties can be grammatical ones and/or natural ones based on real-world entities.[6] Examples of grammatical categories in

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[5] In this study 'category' and 'property' are used as in Matthews (see 1974: 66 & 136) where 'categories' are e.g. person, number, case, gender etc., and 'properties' are individual terms of categories, such as 1st, 2nd, singular, plural, nominative, accusative, male, female etc. For a survey of other terms in use see Carstairs-McCarthy (1992: 196f.).

[6] The distinction 'grammatical' versus 'natural' categories here is meant in the same sense as grammatical and natural gender. Both types of category are grammatical in the sense that they display formal contrasts in the personal pronouns, although governed by different criteria.

the personal pronouns in (earlier) English are (nominative, accusative, dative, genitive) case and (masculine, feminine, neuter) grammatical gender. Examples of real-world-based categories in the personal pronouns in English or Japanese are for instance person, natural gender and T/V.[7] Of course, categorization of the real world in language (as well as of course types of grammatical category) can differ from language to language — something abundantly clear in worldwide comparative studies of pronoun systems (see for example the articles on pronouns by Ingram and Head in Greenberg 1978). These two types of category are not necessarily mutually exclusive — both can be relevant in pronouns. Furthermore, both types of category — for example person and case — can be represented in the same pronoun. Diachronic change in the real-world/grammatical basis of categories is also possible: for instance in grammatical to natural gender where selection of the gender pronoun becomes increasingly governed by the gender of the real-world referent rather than the grammatical gender of the antecedent.

Fundamental in the personal pronouns is the connection between category/property distinction in noun phrases and in personal pronouns. This connection can be expressed as the following implicational statement:

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[7] The terms T and V, coined by Brown and Gilman in their 1960 paper 'The Pronouns of Power and Solidarity', are often used as abbreviations for socially differentiated forms of address. However, these abbreviations, from Latin *tu* and *vos*, are not satisfactory, as 3rd person forms (such as German 3rd p. plural *Sie*) also occur as forms of address. Similarly, the 1st person *pluralis majestatis* is not accurately labelled 'V'. And, of course, examination of Japanese — and indeed close examination of English — also shows these terms to be inadequate: it is not only in *address* that T/V-like criteria are relevant. This will be discussed further in Howe (forthcoming c).

If a category/property distinction — grammatical and/or real world — is made in noun phrases, then the distinction will usually also be made (though not necessarily with the same formatives) in the personal pronouns.

The relevance of noun phrase distinction is of course that syntactically personal pronouns function like noun phrases. That the pronouns parallel or follow distinction made in noun phrases is clear from their proform nature.

Note, however, that the implicational statement above does not exclude *additional* real-world-based distinctions absent in noun phrases being made in pronouns. Grammatical categories in the personal pronouns are dependent on distinctions made in noun phrases. Real-world-based categories, on the other hand, do not *depend* on distinction made in noun phrases and *can* always occur, and indeed according to Greenberg (1966: 113) person and number are universal categories in pronouns systems.[8]

The connection between category/property distinction in noun phrases and in personal pronouns is immediately apparent from a historical comparison of the personal pronouns in English: languages such as English that have lost much of their earlier noun phrase inflection also have more distinction in the personal pronouns in their earlier stages than in their later stages — contrast the Old English and Modern English pronouns for instance in Howe (1996: 62-63, 131-133, 167).[9]

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[8] Cited in Head (1978).
[9] The English subjective and objective case forms will be discussed later in the paper. Why personal pronouns often retain distinctions *longer* is discussed in Howe (1996:

If we look at Japanese, as Japanese noun phrases do not inflect for instance for case (instead using particles), we would be surprised if Japanese personal pronouns had an inflectional (here case) distinction that noun phrases did not.

That for example person or T/V can remain as categories in pronouns even if not normally distinguished in noun phrases can be explained by their real-world nature — they are not *dependent* on distinction made in noun phrases. However, this does not mean that these real-world-based categories/properties are obligatory in personal pronouns: that also real-world-based distinction can be lost from the personal pronouns is shown by the loss of any formal T/V distinction in the pronouns in Present English. In fact, although (even) person as a category may seem fundamental to the pronouns — indeed as has already been stated Greenberg cited it as a 'universal' — according to Mühlhäusler and Harré (1990: 62-64) not all languages have pronominal categories involving three persons.

The maintenance of some real-world-based category/property distinctions in the personal pronouns, such as person distinctions or natural gender distinction, even when absent from noun phrases, could be to facilitate clearer reference. Note also the occurrence of other real-world-based categories/properties in pronouns to facilitate reference: *personal/non-personal* and *animate/inanimate* often come under the heading of

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69-74). It is important to note that retention of forms in the personal pronouns does not always mean retention of the original category/property — a common development in the personal pronouns in English and other languages is reanalysis, where old *forms* are reanalysed to a new *use*. One example are the English 3rd person singular gender forms: English no longer has a grammatical masc.-fem.-neuter distinction — the personal pronouns *he-she-it* (*him-her* etc.) are reflexes of this, but their use is governed by different (natural rather than grammatical gender) criteria. Reanalysis will be discussed further in Howe (forthcoming a).

natural gender, and *proximity* is a category in Japanese *ko-*, *so-*, *a-* and English *this* and *that*.[10] One could also argue that *number* — not a grammatical category in Japanese noun phrases — is a real-world-based category in Japanese personal pronouns (see further below). T/V, on the other hand, is socially deictic — it points *socially*.

Outside English and Japanese generally speaking are categories such as inclusive/exclusive or visible/invisible. However, note the contraction in English *Let's go* (inclusive) versus *Let us go* (usually exclusive), the definite/indefinite contrast in *YOU/you shouldn't do that* etc., and the constraints in using 3rd person pronouns, especially *she*, to refer to a person in their presence.

Gender

'Though it's the same it sounds different ...

Men's language. Women's language'

Sei Shōnagon, *The Pillow Book*

As Sei Shōnagon's words show,[11] men's and women's language already differed to some extent in Japanese in the late tenth to early eleventh century. Although male and female speech likely varies to some degree in all human languages, Japanese personal pronouns differ from English in that, in addition to the 3rd person, some 1st and 2nd person forms are gender marked — i.e. in informal and less formal Japanese different

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[10] In *ko-*, *so-*, *a-* and *this—that*, both proximity and person are categories, as for example the Japanese *ko-* forms signify proximity to the speaker(s)/writer(s), *so-* forms indicate proximity to the addressee(s), and *a-* forms signify non-proximity to the speaker(s)/writer(s) and addressee(s). The English forms are somewhat simpler, denoting merely proximity or non-proximity to the speaker(s)/writer(s).
[11] English translation (2006: 7).

pronouns are used for 'I', 'we' and 'you' depending on whether the speaker(s) (or writer(s)) is or are male or female.[12]

As Shibatani (1990: 373) points out, in the more formal 1st and 2nd person pronoun forms, the gender of the speaker(s) (or writer(s)) is not marked. Further, although *atasi* and *boku, ore* are commonly cited as female and male forms respectively, this distinction is not absolute: outside the standard language, *atasi* and *atakusi* and *boku* and *ore* may be used by men and women (see Tsujimura 2007: 433, 441-42).

English, as noted above, has different 3rd person (singular) pronouns depending on whether the referent is male ('he') or female ('she') personal, or non-personal ('it').[13]

The English 3rd person gender pronouns illustrate well the grammatical-semantic duality discussed earlier. As stated above, the two types of category － grammatical and natural － are not necessarily mutually exclusive － both can be relevant in personal pronouns. For example in the Germanic languages the selection of 3rd person gender pronoun is frequently governed to varying degrees by both grammatical and natural gender. As also stated earlier, diachronic change in the grammatical/real-world basis of categories is also possible, for instance where selection of the gender pronoun becomes increasingly governed by the gender of the real-world referent rather than the grammatical gender

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[12] For a brief note on 1st and 2nd person (plural) gender-marked pronouns in Spanish, see later in the paper.

[13] Quirk et al. (1985: 341) define 'personal' and 'non-personal' as 'determined primarily by whether the reference is to a "person", *ie* to a being felt to possess characteristics associated with a member of the human race. So defined, "persons" are not only human beings, but may also include supernatural beings (the Deity, gods, angels, fairies, etc), and higher animals'.

of the antecedent. This development — attested to varying extents in English and other Germanic languages — contradicts the hypothesis of unidirectionality proposed in grammaticalization theory (e.g. Hopper & Traugott 1993, chapter 5).

Case

The Japanese particles *wa* and *ga* also illustrate the semantic-grammatical continuum discussed above.[14] As stated earlier, Japanese does not have separate case pronouns, but are formed regularly with particles as noun phrases.

This contrasts with English which has, for many (but not all) of the personal pronouns, separate subjective, objective and genitive/possessive forms. However, the formal subjective and objective case distinction in the pronouns is a reflex of a grammatical property distinction lost in noun phrases. As discussed above and in Howe (1996), personal pronouns eventually lose grammatical categories/properties lost in noun phrases. The former accusative and dative distinction has already been lost in the pronouns (see Howe 1996: chapter 3), and the subjective and objective forms, as will be discussed further in Howe (forthcoming a), have been reanalysed according to syntactic position. This change is outlined briefly below:

Objective forms become increasingly excluded from preverbal position; the nominative form becomes increasingly obligatory preverbally (in

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[14] There is of course not space to discuss *wa* and *ga* or topic and case in detail here. However, for further references and a summary of research, see Shibatani (1990: 262ff.), Takeuchi (1991: 126ff.) and Heycock (2008: 54-83).

inversion postverbally)

Passive constructions

Icelandic *Mér* var gefin bókin af Jóni

German *Ihm* wurde von jemand ein Buch gegeben

Present English *He* was given a book by Junko

Impersonal constructions

Icelandic *mér* er kalt

German *mir* ist kalt

English Chaucer *me* were levere

hym oghte

The nominative form becomes increasingly restricted to preverbal position (in inversion postverbal); the objective form is increasingly generalized in other positions [15]

Present English

It's *me*

I can't stand heights, *me*

I'll have tea, please. *Me* too

She's older than *him*

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[15] Note that in examples such as *Him I really can't stand* the nominative form is still (relatively) preverbal. Note further that even in quite formal English comparatively widespread hypercorrection such as *from Peter and I* etc. also indicates a disparity between (perceived) prescribed use and the natural use of many speakers, though analysis of *x and I* as a polite sequence is also possible (Quirk et al. 1985: 338).

Us girls can always take a joke

Danish

Det er *mig*

Du er større end *mig*

Jeg er lige så god som *ham*

These developments — the first is of course a continuation of the second — represent a major drift in English and other Germanic languages, carried through most in for example English and least in Icelandic, Faroese and German. Compare also some similarities in pronoun usage in French, for example *Moi, je suis anglais* — 'Me, I'm English'. The result in much of Present English is that the choice of subjective or objective pronoun is governed not primarily by its role in the sentence but by position, and, as formal expressions of subject and object case, the subjective and objective forms of the personal pronouns — as *you* shows — are no longer real integral parts of the system of subject-object distinction.

Reanalysis in the pronouns will be discussed further in Howe (forthcoming a).

Number

Although Takeuchi (1999: 64) states, as already mentioned, that Japanese forms such as *watasi, watakusi, anata* and *kimi* 'do not form regular paradigms', Japanese plural pronouns such as *watasitati, anatatati* and so on are in fact more regular than their English equivalents, which do not form plurals regularly. Indeed, according to Hinds (1986: 250 & 252),

Japanese personal pronouns are obligatorily marked for number. Kaiser, Ichikawa, Kobayashi & Yamamoto (2001: 370) state in contrast that 'Japanese personal pron. do not usually distinguish number ... in the first and second person', though a suffix 'can optionally be used for plural'.

Table 5: Example Japanese plural pronouns

	watakusi-tati
watasi-ra	watasi-tati
boku-ra	boku-tati
atasi-ra	atasi-tati
	anata-tati
kimi-ra	kimi-tati
kare-ra	kare-tati
kanozyo-ra	kanozyo-tati

Takeuchi (1999: 64) points out the resemblance of the Japanese pronouns to other nouns with human referents, and in these plurals we can see this clearly. She also states (1999: 64) that 'like other animate nouns with definite referents, they require explicit expression of number'. In contrast again, however, Bunt (2003: 236) writes that a few nouns referring to people (and sometimes animals) can have the plural suffix -*tati* to mark them as plural, 'although this is not obligatory, and a plural meaning is also possible without the suffix'.

　Takeuchi (1999: 69) gives the following plural suffixes, cited here in

increasing formality:

> -ra (informal)
> -domo (humble)
> -tati (plain)
> -gata (exalted)

Example pronoun plurals are *karera, watakusidomo, watasitati, anatagata*. Example nouns with *-tati* are given below:

> kodomotati
> gakuseitati
> senseitati
> tomodati
> masako-san-tati
> dôbutsutati
> inutati

As *-gata* is an 'exalted' suffix, it cannot attach to a noun that refers to the speaker or any of the speaker's in-group, thus *watakusi-ra, watakusi-domo, watakusi-tati*, but not *watakusi-gata (Takeuchi 1999: 69).

Following the discussion earlier in the paper, as Japanese noun phrases generally do not have a grammatical number distinction, we would not expect to find pronouns with grammatical plurals. Even English, which does have a regular plural number distinction in noun phrases, has only the regional nonstandard plural *you-s(e)* with the noun phrase formative.

The innovatory 2nd person plural *yous(e)* was created in the context of the loss of the singular-plural distinction in the 2nd person pronouns with the generalization of the originally plural-only V pronouns *ye/you* etc. (see further Howe 1996: §6.6.2 and forthcoming c). *Yous(e)* is current in Northern American English and in certain areas of Britain such as Liverpool and Glasgow. It further occurs in Australia and northern Hiberno-English. Around a hundred years ago, it is also recorded in England in Norfolk (for references see Howe 1996: 174).

However, in English and other Germanic languages, comparatively few such changes in the pronouns have been by the addition of regular inflection. One reason for this is that often the personal pronouns have comparatively little regular, consistent inflectional pattern and conse-quently often there is very little pattern in the personal pronouns to follow. Furthermore, there is often little or no appropriate noun phrase pattern to follow either as some real-world distinctions (such as person) made in personal pronouns may be absent in noun phrases and, in ambiguity in nominative singular forms, the nominative singular in noun phrase inflection may be unmarked/markerless, for instance for case and/or number. However － as shown by *yous(e)* － where a pattern does exist, changes in the pronouns may follow this pattern.

As will be discussed in Howe (forthcoming a), ad hoc dual/plural compounding is common, for example *you two, you both, you lot, you guys*, and examples of compounding can be found in Japanese pronouns, too, as in *bokura futari* 'we/us two' (example from Hinds 1986: 254).

Southern American English *y'all*, on the other hand, can be regarded as a further development to a *new* pronoun by virtue of its consistent

combination and simplex form. Fusion of elements to a new personal pronoun form can be illustrated as follows:

/juː/ + /ɔːl/ > /jɔːl/

Note also the discussion earlier in the paper of reduction as a characteristic of grammaticalization.

Y'all is widely used on all social levels in Southern American English and there also exists a colloquial inflected *y'all's* as in 'I really like *y'all's* new car' ('your family's new car') (Quirk et al. 1985: 344). The *Dictionary of American Regional English* (F. G. Cassidy — personal communication) has on file for *y'all (come back)* examples from Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Missouri, Tennessee, Virginia, and general South.

English also has the non-standard regional form *you-uns* from 'you' + 'ones' (see Howe 1996: 174).

Similar new plural pronoun forms are found in other languages, for example Dutch and possibly Frisian:

English + 'all' > you + all > y'all
English + 'ones' > you + ones > you-uns
Dutch + 'people' (*liede*) > jullie 'you-people'
Possibly Frisian + 'man, men' > jemma(n)

These examples from English and other languages show the addition not of grammatical plural inflection as in *yous(e)* but of *lexical* plurals such as 'people', 'all', 'ones' and possibly 'man, men' (cf. Howe 1996: 79-80). Parallel

forms are also found outside the Germanic languages, for example Spanish:

'we' － nosotros, nosotras (fem.)
'you (plural)' － vosotros, vosotras (fem.)

As stated above, one reason for the addition of a lexical element rather than a pronominal formative with plural meaning is the lack of consistent morphological pattern in plural marking in the personal pronouns in English and other languages. A further reason is semantic, in that the personal pronouns obviously frequently refer to people, which may also make lexical plurals such as 'people' (and compounds such as 'you   ') more likely.

Lack of grammatical pattern as a factor in lexical addition can also be illustrated by pidgins where much of the original inflection is lost. In Melanesian Pidgin none of the bound forms of English are attested. Here, we find the plural pronoun forms

mifelə
jufelə

with addition of   ə ('fellow') to the singular   ('I', 'me') and   ('you') (data cited in Lehmann 1992: 270f.).

Note, though, as discussed, that English regional non-standard does show the creation of a new distinct plural form by addition of the regular noun plural allomorph, and further to some extent the grammaticalization and analogical extension of (derivatives of)

'people' and *all* as pronominal plural markers in varieties of Dutch, Afrikaans and English. In English, for instance, addition of *-all* may also be found, though to a lesser extent, in forms such as *we-all, we-all's, who-all, what-all*. And in Dutch we find *jullie, wullie, gullie, hullie, zullie,* and in Afrikaans *julle, sulle, haarle, hulle*.

As will be discussed further in Howe (forthcoming a), these examples show how new pronoun forms can develop from personal pronouns plus elements from outside the personal pronoun paradigm, grammatical or lexical.

Thus, the Japanese plural pronouns with *-tati* etc. can be compared with English constructions such as *you guys, you lot* and *you all*.

Takeuchi (1999: 64), as stated above, points out the resemblance of the Japanese pronouns to other nouns with human referents. In the addition of lexical plurals in English and other languages, we can again see parallels.

T/V

T/V is a complex area, both in English and Japanese. However, speakers of Japanese and other languages could express surprise at the *lack* of marking of social relations in English pronouns. In English, the same pronoun can be used for children, parents, grandparents, friends, strangers, prime ministers, presidents and dogs. In this case, it is Japanese that marks such properties, whereas in English they are not marked pronominally.[16]

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[16] Of course, they may be marked in other ways. British (English) English is well known for its 'class' accent for instance, where socioeconomic status is marked phonologically.

As touched on above, English has lost the original 2nd person singular pronoun *thou (thee, thine/thy)* from most varieties. And in Japanese, as is well known, hierarchy and formality affect pronoun usage － and non-usage. These complex areas will be discussed in a separate paper in Howe (forthcoming c).

Conclusions

This paper has taken a very preliminary look at English and Japanese, first considering whether Japanese has personal pronouns at all, and second whether they are comparable to English. The paper has then examined grammatical and semantic categories and properties in the pronouns. As outlined above, English and Japanese pronouns will be examined further in three forthcoming papers: on reanalysis and sources of new pronoun forms (Howe forthcoming a), on reference and ellipsis (forthcoming b), and on pronouns and politeness (forthcoming c).

As an initial conclusion, then, although we can highlight many apparent differences between English and Japanese pronouns and their usage, we should not overlook their fundamental similarities.

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