Pronouns and Politeness in English and Japanese

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Introduction

This paper will examine pronouns and social deixis in English, Japanese and other languages. It forms part of a series of working papers on personal pronouns: Howe (2010a), a preliminary comparison of personal pronouns in English and Japanese, Howe (2009a) on pronoun morphology, Howe (2010b) on new pronouns and loss of pronouns, Howe (forthcoming a) on reanalysis in pronouns, and Howe (forthcoming b) on reference and ellipsis.

Respect, politeness, social distance and formality are complex areas of language use, particularly in Japanese. This short working paper will focus only on personal pronouns and their use (or non-use). The paper will first discuss respect degrees in pronominal reference based on a survey of over a hundred languages worldwide, followed by a brief examination of reciprocity and non-reciprocity. It will then look at English and Japanese pronouns, and 2nd person, 1st person and 3rd person reference — referring to *you, me* and others — followed by a discussion of avoidance of pronominal reference. The final sections of the paper examine the use of names and

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titles and change in forms of reference.

Because of their use in address, 2nd person pronouns have been termed the most *personal* pronouns, and the importance of social factors in pronominal change is demonstrated by the fact that many involve forms of address. However, this is just one aspect of pragmatic variation in person reference. While in European languages such factors are most relevant (though not exclusively so) in address, in Japanese and some other Asian languages T/V-like[1] factors are also important in self-reference and referring to others, and not only in the use of pronouns but also in their avoidance.

The grammaticalisation of respect, social distance or politeness is a well-known feature of Japanese and is an important difference to English, indeed between European languages and other Asian languages such as Korean and Javanese (see e.g. Crystal 2003: 40 & 99). Smith (1983: 77) states that the level of speech in Japanese depends on a 'complex combination of age, sex, social position, nature of previous interactions, and context'. These factors are important in English, too, of course, and may influence pronunciation, word choice and grammar, but are particularly codified in Japanese. Similarly, Japan is sometimes cited for its relative gender distinction,[2] and indeed in the language we can find differences between male and female speech, including forms for 'I', though again it is very likely that differences exist to some extent between male and female speech in all societies.

Japanese, then, is obviously not unique in the representation of social

[1] This terminology is discussed later in the paper.
[2] E.g. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/8213493.stm

meaning in language. Indeed, Britain is well known for its socioeconomic hierarchy or 'class system' and its reflection in language, primarily but by no means exclusively in 'accent', i.e. in phonology. As Japanese speakers are conscious of the 'complex combination of age, sex, social position, nature of previous interactions, and context' in their language choices, so British people can and do make a great many judgements (and indeed hold prejudices) based on another person's accent. People from the UK are often quite able to tell (or make a judgement about) the socioeconomic origin of a caller on the telephone or radio without any other information (such as appearance, income, family tree, school records or birth certificate).

However, one must be cautious about linking language and society too directly — not everything is reflected in language, and not all social dimensions are grammaticalised. For example, although British English is well known for its socioeconomic variation in accent, social differences are not encoded in current English pronouns — the same pronoun 'you', as will be discussed further below, is used to address everyone. And the English distinction of masculine, feminine and neuter in the 3rd person singular pronouns is a historical relic of noun classes rather than a reflection of current gender divisions in society.

Respect degrees in pronominal reference

First we must introduce an umbrella term to allow us to discuss similar phenomena across languages — whether politeness, respect, social distance or the like. Head (1978: 155), in his study of pronominal reference, speaks of 'alternation in reference to convey social meaning'.

The politeness or degree of respect of a great deal of person reference

can be explained by indirectness. For instance the use of the plural rather than the singular means that reference is less direct. This is common in many European languages such as *vous* in French and *vy* in Russian. In English, the plural origins of *you* are still revealed by the plural verb forms *you are, you were*. Such indirectness in person reference – ranging from the most direct to not referring overtly to the person at all – parallels politeness patterns found elsewhere in language. For example:

Get out![3]
Would you mind leaving?
Is that the time?
[Not uttering anything, but glancing at one's watch]

Similar patterns can likely be found in all languages. For example, in Japanese in declining an invitation:

Asita aimasen ka
Iya (desu)!
Tyotto ...

Below we will discuss respect degrees in pronominal reference drawing on the study by Head in Greenberg's (1978) *Universals of Human Language*. Examining more than one hundred languages worldwide, Head summarises his findings as follows with the following tentative conclusions:

[3] Though note the absence of 'you' here with the imperative, which will be discussed further in Howe (forthcoming b).

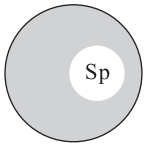
1. Variation of pronominal categories and of types of pronouns to show degrees of respect or social distance is more common in address than in reference to the other participants in discourse
2. Variation of number is the most widespread process for showing degrees of respect or social distance
3. When variation of number is used in reference to convey social meaning, the non-singular typically indicates greater respect or social distance than the singular in any person in which both are used in reference to individuals
4. Variation of the categories of person to show degrees of respect or social distance in address typically co-occurs with variation of number for the same purpose
5. Alternation of person indicates greater differences in degree of respect or social distance than does alternation of number, while alternation of both categories shows greater difference in social meaning than does change of only one of them
6. Reduction and substitution of nouns or nominal expressions are common ways of introducing 3rd person pronouns into address systems
7. When employed to convey social meaning, the categories distant or non-proximate, exclusive, and indefinite or impersonal usually indicate greater respect or social distance than the respective opposing ones, while those of inanimate and non-human typically indicate less respect than their counterparts
8. When used to convey social meaning in reference, demonstrative and reflexive pronouns, as well as common nouns and nominal

[4] For the sake of simplicity, the figure makes a singular 'you' — plural 'y'all, youse' distinction.

Figure 1: Reference in pronouns (after Howe 1996)

1st person
singular ‘I’

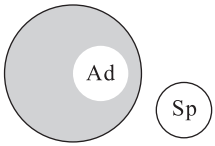
plural ‘we’



a group to which the speaker(s) belong(s)

2nd person
singular ‘you’

plural ‘you’ (*y’all* or *youse*)



a group to which the addressee(s) belong(s)
but the speaker(s) does not

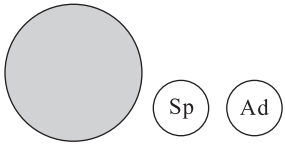
3rd person
singular

not Sp, not Ad
personal male

not Sp, not Ad
personal female

not Sp, not Ad
nonpersonal

plural ‘they’



a group to which neither the
speaker(s) nor the addressee(s) belong(s)

As the examples below show (from Quirk et al. 1985: 340), 'we' and 'you' can refer to several combinations of persons:

we

1st + 1st person	**We**, the undersigned, pledge **ourselves** to ...
1st + 2nd person	**We** complemented **ourselves** too soon, John
1st + 3rd person	The children and I can look after **ourselves**
1st + 2nd + 3rd person	You, Ann, and I are working **ourselves** to death

you

2nd + 2nd person	**You** ought to be ashamed of **yourselves**, children
2nd + 3rd person	You and John will have to cook for **yourselves**

they

3rd + 3rd person	**They** helped **themselves** to coffee and cakes

What these examples also show is that there is an order of preference or hierarchy in the selection of referring pronoun, whereby the 1st person outweighs the 2nd person, which in turn outweighs the 3rd person.

This relative unspecificness of the plural personal pronouns is utilised pragmatically. According to Mühlhäusler and Harré (1990: 40), although "'Officially", the uses of the pronouns are neatly located within a framework of the formal categories of person and number ... evidence from actual studies of use shows that the distinctions between various acts in the performing of which speaker, hearer and third person are morally relevant beings cannot be mapped onto the existing syntactical distinctions in the

English pronoun system.' However, rather than the 'official' meaning not being valid as Mühlhäusler and Harré claim, it is on the contrary the core meaning of the pronouns – i.e. ultimately deriving from the formal categories – that allows this pragmatic variation.

For example, in Figure 1 we can see that the 2nd person plural is less direct than the 2nd person singular because, rather than referring to the addressee singularly, it refers to a group to which the addressee belongs. Using the 3rd person for 2nd person reference is more indirect than using the 2nd person plural as the 3rd person formally excludes reference to the addressee – compare again Figure 1. This usage, then, formally does not refer to the addressee at all. Using the 3rd p. plural for 2nd person reference is more indirect still: not only as with the 3rd p. sing. is there no formal reference to the addressee, but reference is made even less direct by the use of the plural. And of course using no pronoun or making no overt reference at all, as often in Japanese, is even more indirect.

Names and titles are more direct than no pronoun at all, but can be embellished to make them honorific or respectful. Titles will also be discussed later in the paper, as well as their developments to pronouns or influence on pronoun use.

T and V forms differ from more ad hoc pragmatic variants in that they have become codified and their synchronic usage is then less explained by the formal change in person and/or number, but rather as specific T and V forms. Indeed, V usage in many European languages derives from foreign (e.g. French) influence. Note also the possible devaluation or loss in status of some forms of reference, such as German *Er* and Japanese *kisama*, which will be discussed later in the paper.

One further point in a discussion of politeness or respect concerns the 'neutral' or 'normal' register (style or attitude). Shibatani (1990: 175) for instance for Japanese, possibly partly influenced by the written form or language, views casual speech as the deviation from normal or 'neutral' speech. Similarly, Quirk et al. (1985: 26) speak of a middle 'neutral (and normal) English'. However, it is rather that casual, informal speech is the most natural, where speakers are less affected and less likely to use 'correct' forms. Simply because there is a range of registers — marked phonologically, grammatically and/or lexically — does not mean that the middle of the range is the most neutral or 'natural'.[5]

Reciprocity and non-reciprocity

Shibatani (1990: 372) points out that 'One characteristic of the Japanese honorific system is non-reciprocity', i.e. that in a speech setting involving a

[5] Formal or polite language tends to be less direct, more elaborated and longer than informal language — intentionally flouting Gricean maxims. Compare the following examples in Japanese (from Bunt 2003: 213-223 or my own) showing differences in word choice, morphology, titles and utterance length:

Da — desu — de gozaimasu
Iku (-anai, -ta) — ikimasu (-masen, -masita) etc.
O-kyaku-sama
Genki? — O-genki desu ka?
Zyun-tyan, mô tabeta? — Sensei wa mô mesiagarimasita ka?

And English (adapted from Quirk et al. 1985: 27):

Distinguished patrons are requested to ascend to the upper floor.
Upstairs, you lot!

One could state that frequency and formality are opposite tendencies, one to abbreviate, the other to elaborate. If we suggest that unaffected, informal language tends to shortness and economy, that utterances are lengthened when formal would seem to confirm this assumption — speakers go to some length to be polite.

'social superior' and an 'inferior', a 'superior' can use either formal or informal language, but the 'inferior' can use only formal, honorific language 'even if the superior opts for informal language'.

This differs from current English and from several other European languages with pronoun reciprocity in address, whether a T form, as Swedish *du*, or a V form, as English (earlier V) *you* or German *Sie*. Indeed, reciprocity in address in English, as will be discussed later in the paper – where with a movement for equality people wished to be addressed as *you* and not as an inferior as *thou* – was likely a significant factor in the generalisation of a single pronoun of address.

However, as already stated, just because (in)equality is not marked pronominally does not mean it is not marked elsewhere in the language. Socioeconomic status can be marked in many ways – phonologically (e.g. a 'posh' or 'common' accent, dropping your *h*'s, using *t* or glottal stop), grammatically (*ain't*, multiple negatives), or semantically (Pip's 'jack' and Estella's 'nave' in *Great Expectations, dinner* and *tea* (common) and *lunch* and *dinner* (posh), to name a few) – and many speakers will attempt to mask or artificially elevate their socioeconomic ranking by avoiding low status shibboleths and employing linguistic higher status markers – as Labov (1966) clearly showed in his study of postvocalic *r* in up-, mid- and downmarket stores in New York, and the former British prime minister, Tony Blair, showed by substituting glottal stops for *t* to 'lower' his social status.[6]

(In)equality or hierarchy may be marked in non-pronominal reference

[6] Compare for example http://www.independent.co.uk/news/language-estuary-english-engulfs-a-nation-1197104.html

and address using names (most commonly given versus family name plus title), as illustrated by the well-known inverse naming relationship of Farr's Law of Mean Familiarity.[7] For example at university in English-speaking countries a professor may address or refer to her or his students by first name, while they in most cases would use a title plus family name to address or refer to their professor.

Earlier English also showed non-reciprocity in pronouns of address: at least from Chaucer's time, a husband could address his wife in the singular while she used the plural; in the fifteenth and sixteenth century, *thou* was generally used by a superior to an inferior, and *ye/you* by an inferior to a superior; parents generally used *thou* to their children, who in turn addressed their parents as *ye/you* (Finkenstaedt 1963: 85f. & 120-128; Spies 1897: 115-121). And at the turn of the twentieth century, Wright (1905: 272) in his *English Dialect Grammar* records that the 2nd person singular was still used to express familiarity or contempt, and that it could not be used to a 'superior' without impertinence.

English and Japanese pronouns

Tables 1 and 2 show personal pronouns in English and Japanese respec-

[7] Farr's Law of Mean Familiarity, as discovered by Lumer Farr in Stephen Potter's *One-upmanship* (quoted in Crystal, 2003: 45), where the Guv'nor addresses:

Co-director Michael Yates	as	Mike
Assistant director Michael Yates	as	Michael
Sectional manager Michael Yates	as	Mr Yates
Sectional assistant Michael Yates	as	Yates
Indispensable secretary Michael Yates	as	Mr Yates
Apprentice Michael Yates	as	Michael
Night-watchman Michael Yates	as	Mike

tively. 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 in Howe (2010a), Japanese has many possible forms, though individual speakers generally 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 these preliminary examinations, 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

Table 2: Personal pronouns in Japanese (adapted from Shibatani 1990: 371)

<table>
<tr><td>ore</td><td>boku</td><td rowspan="2">watasi</td><td rowspan="2">watakusi</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">atasi</td></tr>
<tr><td>omae</td><td>kimi</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">anata</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">anta</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">kare</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">kanozyo</td></tr>
</table>

The two schematic paradigms are arranged vertically by person (1st, 2nd and 3rd). Plural forms of Japanese pronouns, not shown here, are discussed in Howe (2010a). The Japanese pronouns are arranged horizontally by increasing formality (left to right). Pronouns with gender marking, either of the user and/or the referent, are shaded. The Japanese 2nd person forms in particular require further comment: as Shibatani (1990: 372) states, none is quite appropriate when addressing a person of higher status. If possible, overt reference is avoided or name and/or title is used. The 3rd person pronouns *kare* and *kanozyo* are also frequently avoided: they can be used by a speaker to refer to person of equal or lower social status; in other cases a nominal expression such as *ano kata* 'that person' (etymologically 'yonder') or name plus honorific or other referential term is used (Shibatani 1990: 372-3). Pronoun avoidance will be discussed later in the paper.

Below we will discuss 2nd person, 1st person and 3rd person reference in more detail.

Your Highness or Hey you!
Addressing the addressee

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. Indeed, authors discussing Japanese may distinguish between referent honorifics and addressee honorifics (see Tsujimura 2007: 429).

The situation is also often more complex than a simple T-V dichotomy, as social distinction in forms of address, self-reference or reference to others may include more than two forms, for instance pronominal forms, non-pronoun forms such as name and/or title, and avoidance of overt reference. Further, Japanese often make(s) an inside-outside or inclusive-exclusive distinction rather than a purely 'vertical' one. A more appropriate labelling system, at least a working hypothesis of one in this preliminary paper – allowing for more than a simple dichotomy and including languages not related to or influenced by Latin, such as Japanese, might be -F and +F. This would enable a range of reference from for example --F through -F to +F and ++F. I am of course aware '(in)formal' alone does not cover the full range of contexts in which various forms of reference are used. However, it is a convenient umbrella abbreviation allowing us to

discuss this range of contexts, forms and usages together. The use of relative terms rather than absolutes also enables better cross-linguistic comparison, as values may change diachronically and vary from language to language and in language varieties (cf. further the discussion in Howe 1996).

Overall, one can say that +/- F or T/V forms specify or relate to the speaker's/writer's social relationship to the addressee(s) or referent(s) and/or the context in which the utterance takes place. Takeuchi (1999: 57) states for Japanese: 'in order for the speaker to decide on an appropriate linguistic coding, e.g. to refer to himself [sic], he must assess the status of the referents of the grammatical participants of his utterance, above all the subject and object, their mutual status, their status in relation to himself, and to his interlocutor(s)'.

Speakers of Japanese and other languages could express surprise at the English *lack of* marking of social distinctions in pronouns. The same pronoun can be used to address children, dogs, parents, grandparents, friends, strangers, prime ministers and presidents. The development of the plural *you* as a general form of address in English and loss of the singular *thou* will be discussed later in the paper.

As well as 2nd person pronouns, 3rd person pronouns can be used as forms of address, commonly deriving from the use of titles (see Howe 2010b for a brief discussion). One of the best-known examples is German *Sie*. However, we can also find ad hoc examples of this in English:

> 'Will **the Deputy Prime Minister** now give an undertaking to the House that **he** will intervene ...'

'Does **my right honourable friend** recognise that ... Does **he** also recognise the importance that ...'

And in fact, a century or so ago in English, in the dialects of the north, in Lancashire, Cheshire and in Suffolk *he* was often used for 'you'. In Suffolk it was used 'when the speaker wishes to be particularly respectful'; conversely, in Cheshire it was sometimes used by a superior to an inferior, and in the West Riding of Yorkshire it was only used when addressing children (Wright 1905: 274).

Head (1978: 167) reports use of 3rd person personal pronouns for reference to the addressee for a sample of languages around the world, including Amharic, Bemba, Kashmiri, Sotho, Tagalog and others.

Referring to *me* or *oneself*

As shown in Table 2 above, Japanese has a range of words for *I*, i.e. words used to refer to 'me' or 'oneself', the speaker. These include *ore, boku, atasi, watasi* and *watakusi*. Like the forms for 'you' in many European languages, these vary in their formality. They can also vary for gender.

Although in European languages it is generally forms of address that vary in this way, the selection of the form for 'I' can also depend, to a lesser extent, on social factors. The first example in English is in requests, where the 1st p. singular pronoun *me* is often replaced colloquially by the plural *us*, for example:

Lend **us** [= me] a tenner

Do **us** [= me] a favour

Give **us** [me] a kiss[8]

This parallels the T-V distinction in many European (and other) languages, which we should rather term E(go) and N(os).

A further example is the 'royal we' or *pluralis majestatis*, as in Queen Victoria's apocryphal:

We are not amused

And Margaret Thatcher's

We have become a grandmother[9]

This usage is of course also explained by the group reference of the plural pronoun discussed above. Head (1978: 163-4) states that the 'royal we' is found at one time or another 'in most, if not all, languages of Western Europe'.

In addition, we can show in this sentence that the 'editorial we' for self-reference is common in academic writing in English. In this case, the distance is not so much social as personal — making less direct reference to the author for the sake of modesty and to give an impression of greater objectivity. This 'inclusive we' also serves to include the reader in the discussion — note again the group reference of the 1st person plural discussed above and shown in Figure 1.

[8] In the northeast of England, *us* is used more generally as singular.
[9] 3rd March 1989, www.margaretthatcher.org/document/107590

As well as the use of the 1st person plural for self-reference in Indo-European languages such as Sanskrit, Greek, Latin and others, Head also reports it for a wider range of languages, including Amharic, Arabic, Haida, Kannada, Navaho, Tagalog and Turkish. In all these languages, though there are also exceptions, use of the non-singular for self-reference implies greater respect due to the speaker or greater social distance between the speaker and others (Head 1978: 165).

Referring to others – *She*'s the cat's mother

In the 3rd person in English, there are some pragmatic constraints on using 3rd person pronouns. This will be discussed with Japanese below.

Avoidance of pronouns

Suzuki (1978: 113), writing on Japanese in the 1970s, states that 'no one would use such pronouns as *anata* "you" when talking to senior members of the family'. Shibatani (1990: 372) states that, given non-reciprocity in Japanese, 'none of the second-person pronouns is quite appropriate when addressing a person of socially higher status' and 'if possible, the reference is avoided altogether'. He adds that, along with *anata*, forms such as *kimi, anta* and *omae* 'can never be used if the speaker wishes to show his deference to the addressee'. He concludes by stating that the 2nd person pronouns above are thus 'usable only by a person addressing a social equal or inferior'. Shibatani (1990: 372) believes that the lack of a socially appropriate 2nd person pronoun in such situations is 'one of the factors contributing to the wide distribution of the zero pronoun'.

Shibatani (1990: 364) sees as fundamental to the honorific mechanism in

Japanese an 'avoidance of direct attribution of an event to a person', comparing this 'defocusing' with the use of plural pronouns as singular forms of address as in French *vous*, or indeed earlier English *ye/you*, mentioned above. This is what we earlier labelled *indirectness*. Shibatani states: 'What better way is there to achieve this defocusing effect than not mentioning the person referred to?', adding that 'Japanese, being a language with a highly developed honorific system ..., may thus have a good motivation for a high degree of ellipsis.'

Ellipsis in English and Japanese will be discussed in greater detail in Howe (forthcoming b). However, as is well known, ellipsis in Japanese is not just to avoid direct person reference – it is a major characteristic of the language and pronouns are also omitted, or not used where English would use them, when referring to inanimate objects, such as here a car (adapted from Bunt 2003: 235):

Atarashii kuruma ga arimasu. Totemo takakatta desu.
[I] have got a new car. [It] was very expensive.

We can therefore state that Japanese generally shows a relatively high degree of ellipsis (or English shows a relatively high degree of redundancy), with information provided by the linguistic and/or extralinguistic context, and this characteristic is used in polite, respectful or honorific language to avoid referring to the person overtly.

Although pronominal or person reference is often avoided in Japanese, some languages show even stronger avoidance, with *taboo* a factor in pronominal usage in some languages of the world. Taboo represents the

extreme end of a scale of pragmatic factors influencing pronoun usage (Howe 1996: 75). One can argue that the loss in English of *thou* was a type of socially deictic taboo of referring to a person's inferior status.

Suzuki (1978: 123) also labels social changes in forms of self-reference and address 'taboo-type changes'. He states that 'a taboo is an act of avoiding a direct reference to a certain object or fact, out of fear or shyness or for religious reasons. When reference to these objects or facts becomes absolutely necessary they are spoken of indirectly or suggestively by means of other words'. Suzuki (1978: 123) states that 'The fact that so-called personal pronouns in present-day Japanese are not really words which directly indicate either the speaker or the addressee, but words that indirectly refer to them, as well as the fact that in the history of the language they have frequently replaced one another, definitely shows that they are taboo-related. Indeed, the Japanese have a tendency even today to do without personal pronouns in conversation whenever possible.'

Thus, as discussed in Howe (2010b), many Japanese pronoun forms derive from some kind of title (such as *kimi* 'lord' or 'emperor') or from some kind of directional deictic (such as *anata* 'that direction' or 'yonder'). Such taboo is paralleled by other euphemisms, both directional and names or titles, for instance 'asoko' in Japanese and 'backside', 'bottom', 'fanny' and 'willy' in English, to name but a few. And, as also discussed in Howe (1996: 75), lexical replacement or avoidance may occur because of taboo – see Lehmann (1992: 90, 260, 263f.) and Trudgill (2000: 20-21) for possible examples.

It is not only in forms of address that person or pronominal reference may be avoided. As already cited above, Shibatani (1990: 372) states that a

'similar observation can be made with regard to the third-person pronouns *kare* "he" and *kanozyo* "she"'. They can be used by a speaker to refer to a social equal or 'inferior'; in other cases, however, a nominal expression such as *ano kata* 'that person' or name plus the honorific *san* is used (Shibatani 1990: 372-373 & 377-378). Similarly, Hinds (1986: 257-258) states that *kare* and *kanozyo* are avoided in reference to family members and to superiors and that 'extensive use of *kare* and *kanojo* is considered improper'.

In English, too, there are pragmatic constraints on using 3rd person personal pronouns. English speakers will avoid using a 3rd person pronoun situationally, especially *she*, to refer to a person in their presence, if their social prestige or degree of respect is very high, even in their absence. Here, the pronoun is substituted by a name and/or title, for example:

Recently at university

Teacher 1 (to a student waiting in corridor): Are you waiting to see a teacher?

Student: I'm here to see **her** [gesturing to Teacher 2 approaching]

Teacher 2: Who are you calling '**her**'?

Discussing a patient's health at the hospital bed

(Impolite) **He** has just had his appendix removed

(Polite) **Mr Jones** has just had his appendix removed

Father to a child

Sebastian, will you do the washing up?

(Impolite) Ask **her** [= mother] to do it. I'm busy.

(Polite) Can't you ask **mum** to do it? I'm busy right now.

In some families, there is an expression '*She*'s the cat's mother', meaning that the pronoun is suitable to refer to an animal, but not a female family member.

If the name of the person is unknown, English speakers will often use *this lady, this man, this gentleman* or similar rather than the pronoun:

(Impolite) **He** would like to know the way to the station.
(Polite) **This man** or **this gentleman** would like to know the way to the station.

The use of names and titles in Japanese and English will be discussed in the following section.

In the 1st person, too, as well as the T/V-like (or E/N) factors discussed earlier, we can find some avoidance or replacement of personal pronouns. In Japanese, the reflexive *zibun* 'self' can be used for formal self-reference, primarily by male speakers (for statistics see references in Takeuchi 1999: 65). And in English, reflexives can also occur in place of personal pronouns, for example (from Quirk et al. 1985: 359-360):

My sister and **I/myself** went sailing yesterday.
Except for **us/ourselves**, the whole village was asleep.

Quirk et al. (1985: 359) term such usage 'semi-emphatic', i.e. the reflexive conveys somewhat more force or direction than the ordinary

personal pronoun. Additionally, like *zibun, myself* and the other reflexive forms are felt to be somewhat more formal than *me* etc., although Quirk et al. add that many feel *myself* in such use to be 'a hyperurbanism, a genteel evasion of the normal personal pronoun'. This is because many speakers prefer to avoid the combination *X and me* even when (historically) correct, as it is perceived to be a low socioeconomic shibboleth; they therefore replace *me* by *myself*:[10]

They have never invited Margaret and **me/myself** to dinner.

A further example is the use of the indefinite (and therefore more indirect) pronoun *one* for self (or other) reference as in (Quirk et al. 1985: 387-388):

I like to dress nicely. It gives **one** confidence.

where *one* refers to 'people in general' often with particular reference to the speaker. In English, the choice of the more formal *one* over the more informal *me* or *you* for such reference depends on the sociolinguistic context and one's addressee(s).

Use of names and titles as forms of address or reference

In this section, we will discuss the use of names and titles as forms of address or reference. 'Title' here means a name or epithet signifying rank,

[10] Compare the hypercorrection of *me* to *I* in phrases such as *From my sister and I*.

office or function.[11] Writing in the 1970s, Suzuki (1978: 113) states that 'it is not an exaggeration to say that present-day Japanese has no personal pronouns which can be used to refer to superiors'. He states that *anata* is 'not easily used when addressing persons of higher status'. For forms of address within the family, he shows (1978: 127ff.) schematically how titles are generally used to family members of higher status (parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, older brothers and sisters), while pronouns can be used to family members of lower status (younger brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, nephews and nieces and so on). Terms used for self-reference within the family are also governed by the same higher-lower status dichotomy, depending on one's conversation partner.

Suzuki (1978: 131) adds that 'The same rules that govern the uses of terms for self-reference and address ... within the family unit apply almost unchanged to social situations outside the family'. When Japanese address a teacher or 'superior' at work, they are likely to use *sensei* 'teacher', *katyô (san)* '(section) chief' or similar. Titles are often used together with the addressee's family name, as in *Shimizu-sensei* (Shibatani 1990: 372).

A few examples of title use in Japanese are given below (adapted from Bunt 2003):

Ikeda san mo ikimasu ka
Is Mr Ikeda [= you] going too?

Sensei wa mô mesiagarimasita ka
Has professor [= you] already taken lunch?

[11] Collins English Dictionary and Thesaurus.

Otôsan wa dô omoimasu ka
What does father [= you] think?

As mentioned above, titles can be used not only in addressing or referring to others, but also in self-reference, particularly when talking to children. For instance, Suzuki (1978: 112) gives the example of a father addressing his children:

Otôsan no iu koto o kiki-nasai
Listen to father [= me]

Or the same man to his nephew or niece:

Kurisumasu ni **ozisan** ga zitensya o purezento-siyô
Uncle [= I] will give you a bicycle for Christmas.

However, as stated in Howe (2010b), although this illustrates a very significant extent of title use, use of titles is certainly not exclusive to Japanese. Many of the languages of East and Southeast Asia have a 'whole range of alternative pronominal and quasi-pronominal forms' (Goddard 2005: 19). In European languages, titles are or have been common in person reference. For example, in Swedish until comparatively recently title and name were used in place of, or in avoidance of, pronominal address (see Mårtensson 1988: 143-144 for a brief summary and references):

Swedish

Har **professorn** läst min uppsats?
Has professor-DEF [= you] read my essay?

Compare also Frisian (West) (Tiersma 1985: 63)

Dominy hat in moaie wein kocht
Pastor [= you] bought a nice car

And in German, the current use of the 3rd person plural pronoun *Sie* (and earlier the singular *Er*) as a polite form of address derives from title use. From the seventeenth century the 3rd person pronouns (*Er* and *sie*) were used, initially with titles such as *Herr* 'Sir' and *Frau* 'Madam' and then also independently. Subsequently, the 3rd person plural pronoun *Sie* (equivalent to English 'they') became the more polite or V form of address. This usage also spread to Danish and Norwegian (Bokmål) with the 3rd person plural *De*. Some illustrative examples from German are given below:

Sprechen **Sie** Deutsch?
Do they [= you] speak German?

Wie geht es **Ihnen**? Gut, danke. Und **Ihnen**?
How goes it them-DAT [= you]? Good, thanks. And them-DAT [= you]?
'How are you? Fine, thanks. And you?'

Haben **Sie Ihren** Koffer schon gepackt?

Have they [= you] their [= your] suitcase already packed?

If one were to consider Japanese polite or respect language to be one or more levels of formality above English (and many other European languages) — i.e. that in similar social situations, Japanese will tend to use a more formal style than English — we should then look for parallels between Japanese and English not on the same formality level, but at a higher level of formality in English. And indeed, if we look at somewhat older English style, or in addressing people of very high social status in English, we can find some parallels between the two languages, at least in terms of address. For instance, in somewhat old-fashioned shop assistant style, a customer could be addressed as:

(Old-fashioned salesperson) Would **madam** prefer a larger size?

Or in humour, mimicking an older exchange between aristocrat and servant:

(Humorous wife to spouse) Will **his lordship** be taking tea this afternoon?

And in parliamentary debate in the UK, for instance in the following examples cited above from 2010:[12]

[12] UK Parliament, House of Commons, 27 July 2010, www.parliament.uk

'Will **the Deputy Prime Minister** now give an undertaking to the House that **he** will intervene ...'
'Does **my right honourable friend** recognise that ... Does **he** also recognise the importance that ...'

Other dated or highly restricted forms of address include *Your Highness, Your Excellency* and *Your Grace*. However, in current, everyday English, which is usually less formal, such usages are less common.

As stated above, in Japanese titles can also be used for self-reference. Examples include family words such as 'mother', 'father' and 'big sister', for instance (Bunt 2003: 9, 209 & 233):

Otôsan katte yaru yo
Father [= I] will buy it for you

However, here, too, parallel examples can be found in English. In the family, titles can be used for self-reference when talking to children, for example:

Mummy's going to work now (spoken by mother)
Give **daddy** a kiss (spoken by father)

And, as also stated earlier, in 3rd person reference English speakers will avoid using a 3rd person pronoun situationally to refer to a person in their presence; if their prestige is very high, even in their absence. Here the

pronoun is substituted by a name and/or title, for example:

Referring to someone in their presence

(Impolite) **She** has just joined our Department

(Polite) **Professor Smith** had just joined our Department

Finally, note that titles are not necessarily polite, as the example below can illustrate:

I met Smithy, your old teacher, the other day.

How is **the old dragon**?

Changes in forms of reference

Pronominalisation of titles

As discussed in Howe (2010b) and mentioned above, several Japanese pronouns derive from some kind of title, for example:

Table 3: Japanese pronouns from titles

watakusi 'I'	'private or personal' or 'private (thing)'
boku 'I'	'(your) servant'
kimi 'you'	'lord' or 'emperor'
kisama 'you'	'noble person'

We can find parallel developments in other languages. In Dutch, various explanations have been offered for the origin of the 2nd person V

pronoun *u*, several of which are based on derivation from an abbreviated form of *Uwe Edelheid* or *Uwe Edele* 'Your Honour', often also assuming influence of the oblique and/or possessive forms of the 2nd p. plural pronoun (for further discussion, see Howe 1996: 227-229).

A development of *u* from *Uwe Edelheid*, *Uwe Edele* would show not only the use of titles as forms of address, but a further step of grammaticalisation to a personal pronoun. An early stage in the development of a title to a personal pronoun is probably its abbreviation (e.g. in Dutch *Uwe Edt, U Ed., UE*) —a sign of more frequent use (whether in writing or speech) — compare the discussion in Howe (2009a) of the shortening of frequently used forms.

In Japanese, too, as also discussed in Howe (2009a) and (2010a), there are several contracted forms of the 1st person 'watakusi' (cited in Makino and Tsutsui 1986/1989: 28-29), which suggests frequency of use and to some extent grammaticalisation from a title to a pronoun.

Table 4: Pronominalisation in Japanese

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

Pronominalisation of titles is also found in other languages, one of the most well known of which is Spanish *Usted* which derives from *Vuestra Merced* ('Your Grace'). A parallel development is found in Portuguese *Você* from *Vossa Mercê* (Head 1978: 185).

If we construct a table of these examples, we can see that their etymologies resemble those of the Japanese forms:

Table 5: Pronouns from titles in selected languages

Possibly Dutch u	'your honour'
Spanish usted	'your grace'
Portuguese você	'your grace'

As the Japanese examples show, pronominalisation of titles is not limited to forms of address. Head (1978: 187) points out that a 'widespread means of showing respect to an addressee is to humble oneself in self-reference' by the use of terms such as 'slave' or 'servant' (as in Japanese *boku*). He cites this process in Persian, Khmer, Malay, Javanese, Sundanese, Thai, Burmese and Vietnamese.

Titles share a similarity with personal pronouns in that they designate not the individual as such but a *role* (or rank – relatively high or low – with social deixis). The earlier example above of a father and uncle may illustrate this: speaking with his child, the man is 'otôsan' or 'father'; speaking with his nephew or niece, he is 'ozisan' or 'uncle'; and perhaps at work he refers to himself as 'boku', while others call him 'katyô'. This role or rank reference may be one reason why we commonly find titles as more

deferential pronoun substitutes, and in some cases grammaticalisation of titles to personal pronouns.

As well as pronominalisation, a process of 'de-pronominalisation' from Old to Early Middle Japanese has also been described. Frellesvig (2010: 245) states that the Old Japanese system of personal pronouns, already supplemented by a number of terms of address, was lost in the Early Middle Japanese period. He concludes (2010: 245) that 'around the middle of EMJ there is no longer a system of personal pronouns as such, but an inventory of terms of address and of self-reference', a development described by Vovin (2003: 95, cited in Frellesvig 2010: 245) as 'de-pronominalisation'. Such 'de-pronominalisation' demonstrates the power of social factors in language change.

Changes in meaning

Sakuma (1937/1959), cited in Suzuki (1978: 121), points to a common pattern of development for new forms for speaker self-reference in Japanese:

(1) First, the form conveys the speaker's humility towards the addressee
(2) Gradually it comes to convey a speaker's sense of superiority over the addressee
(3) Finally, it can only be used when the speaker looks down on the addressee and thus falls out of general use

One example of this development (Suzuki 1978: 121) is *boku*, which was a literary form used primarily in the Tokugawa Period (1603-1868) in

Japanese written in classical Chinese style. Its meaning was 'your servant' and conveyed the speaker's inferiority towards the addressee. Its use in spoken Japanese came during the Meiji era (1868-1912). Today, *boku* is not appropriate for use when speaking to 'superiors' or in formal contexts.

According to Sakuma, changes in the Japanese forms of address exactly mirror those of the 1st person forms. For example (see Suzuki 1978: 122 and 175, citing Tsujimura 1953/1968) *kisama*

(1) Originally showed respect towards the addressee
(2) Gradually began to imply contempt
(3) Is now, at best, a rough expression permissible only between close friends[13]

Similar 'fluctuating social deixis', i.e. changes in the social meaning of pronouns or other forms of address are common in European languages, and without doubt other languages. Unlike European languages, however, Japanese also shows such changes in 1st person forms, i.e. forms for self-reference.

In English, the first definite examples of a V form of address date from the second half of the thirteenth century (Kennedy 1915: 85). By the time of Chaucer, the plural was already 'vollkommen selbstverständlich' among the upper class (Finkenstaedt 1963: 91). Finkenstaedt (1963: 92) believes that in the fifteenth century the use of the plural spread among the middle class.

[13] *Kisama* is used in 'male bastions' such as the army and sports teams to subordinates or equals. In ordinary life, 'if you address someone with *kisama*, it signals that you're trying to pick a fight!' Kaiser et al. (2001: 373).

In the seventeenth century the use of *thou* in colloquial language decreased rapidly (Finkenstaedt 1963: 120 & 172).

The development of the 2nd person pronouns in English is characterised by an increase in the domains of the V form *ye/you* and a reduction in the domains of the T form *thou/thee*. As the use of *ye/you* as a singular form of address became more common, the more it became the normal or unmarked form, while *thou/thee* on the other hand became the marked pronoun. According to Finkenstaedt, the frequent use of *thou/thee* as a form of insult may have contributed to its loss as a form of address both in the family and also to servants. Finkenstaedt (1963: 128ff.) gives examples from trials from the sixteenth to early seventeenth centuries where defendants were addressed as *thou/thee* in the heat of an argument – which may also be an expression of very strong emotion (cf. Mühlhäusler & Harré 1990: 153) – the most famous being the 'for I thou thee, thou Traitor' to Walter Raleigh.

Finkenstaedt (1963: 224-226) points to the influence of London and its surrounding area in the giving up of *thou*, and this seems to be confirmed by the distribution of 2nd p. sing. nom. forms mapped in *The Linguistic Atlas of England* (M67), which shows *thou/thee* forms retained in dialect in the North, West and Southwest, i.e. in areas furthest from London. The spread of the plural V form of address to the middle class has already been noted above, and it is possible that the rise of the middle class was an important factor in the increase in the use of *ye/you* at the expense of *thou/thee*. As Wales (1983: 118f.) points out, the aspirations of the middle class towards the habits of the politest society would mean that patterns of speech would also be imitated; this may have been particularly true of

women, judging by present-day studies which suggest that middle class women favour 'standard' forms more than men (see Wales 1983: 119). In addition, where a person's status was uncertain, it is possible that *ye/you* would be used as the form of address rather than *thou/thee* to avoid possible insult to the addressee. Finkenstaedt (1963: 224-225) also sees as a factor in the spread of *ye/you* in English the formation of the modern parliament and the movement for equality in the seventeenth to eighteen centuries. To some extent, then, the spread of *ye/you* could be explained as a sign of *equality* rather than inequality.

In Swedish, and to some extent in a number of other European countries, a parallel but opposite movement has led to a more recent spread of the *T* form of address (*du*, cognate with English *thou*) as a sign of equality or solidarity, though for example in Germany and to some extent in Sweden this has reversed somewhat. In Japanese, Suzuki (1978: 121-122) also mentions an possible attempt at democratisation of Japanese pronouns by the National Language Council, who in 1952 suggested more general use of *watakusi* 'I' and *anata* 'you'.

The loss of the singular-plural distinction in the 2nd person pronouns in English has meant that ambiguity is possible in pronominal reference — unlike the subject.-obj. distinction of *you*, number is not indicated syntactically, and, although *you was* was common in the eighteenth century, number distinction of the 2nd person through verb morphology has been lost (at least in standard English). Whether a speaker or writer is addressing one or more people may be clear from context, and plural reference can be made clear by the addition of lexical quantifiers such as *you lot* and (especially American English) *you guys* — compare Howe (1996).

However, in several varieties of English a new singular-plural distinction in the 2nd person has been created by the addition of a pluralising element. In Southern American English *all* has been added to *you* to give a new plural form *y'all* (see further Howe 1996). Secondary plural distinction is also found in the form *yous*, *youse* where the regular noun plural allomorph [z] has been extended to the personal pronoun *you*. This form is current in Northern American English, and in certain areas of Britain such as Liverpool and Glasgow (Quirk et al. 1985: 344); it also occurs in Australia and in northern Hiberno-English (Harris 1984: 131). Trudgill (1990: 85) notes *youse* in Belfast and Dublin and in Merseyside dialect. At the turn of the twentieth century Wright (1905: 274) records *yous* in Norfolk, as well as *yous* and *yees* in Ireland.

Social usage has thus led to significant changes in the English personal pronouns, as it has in Japanese. In present standard English *you* has no connotations of T or V. As stated above, this does not of course mean that English no longer expresses social meaning linguistically. However, it does mean that the English personal pronouns are no longer socially deictic.

Conclusions

What we have found in this paper is that, rather than English and Japanese being fundamentally different, they in fact share many features. What often differs is the extent to which various features are manifest. To summarise, then, what we are dealing with is not factors exclusive to one language, but common characteristics of the social use of language.

The next two working papers will discuss reanalysis and ellipsis in English and Japanese.

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