

THE FIRST AND SECOND PERSON PRONOUNS IN JAPANESE

— from the sociolinguistic perspective —

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I INTRODUCTION

Roger Brown and Albert Gilman carried out an investigation of pronouns of address and demonstrated that they were closely associated with "two dimensions fundamental to the analysis of all social life—the dimensions of power and solidarity". Their study of the semantics of pronouns of address revealed "covariation between the

The writer expresses his gratitude to Mr. Peng for some ideas from his "La Parole of Japanese Pronouns."

pronouns used and the objective relationship existing between speaker and addressee". (Brown and Gilman, p.252) Their analysis concentrated on the pronouns of western languages, such as French, German or Italian. It would be interesting to find out if the same sort of relationship between use of pronouns and social status exists in Oriental languages such as Japanese.

Japanese society is sometimes said to be structured vertically rather than horizontally, which means that there is a rigid hierarchy in the social organization and positions of speakers and hearers in a society. For example, the singular pronoun of address, which has two forms in Italian (*tu* and *voi*), in French (*tu* and *vous*), in German (*du* and *Sie*), can be classified into several in Japanese: *anata*, *anta*, *kimi*, *omae*, *kisama*, etc., and these diversified pronouns seem to be contingent upon social rank of speakers and addressees. In such a society, once a vertical relationship is established, it tends to become more inflexible by loyalty and obligation. It is postulated that the development of honorific expressions may have resulted from this type of vertical relationship.

Sex differences appear in standard usage inside and outside the family. The use of 'male' particles versus 'female' particles, the tendency on the part of women to use more honorific prefixes and suffixes than men, the more frequent use of polite verbs on the part of women as compared to men, the existence of special vocabulary and suffixes used only by or for men—all these and a number of other linguistic patterns accentuate the differences in the usage of personal pronouns by sex.

Age differences also appear outside family usage and are once again relative to the speaker. A child may call an older boy by the term meaning "older brother", a young woman by the term meaning

“aunt”, etc. In Japanese the term used is in direct relationship to the age of the person being spoken to. A number of terms for age categories (relative to the speaker) are available.

Not only social rank, sex and age but also interpersonal relationships in society play a crucial part in usage. The Japanese are said to make clear distinctions according to the following three categories: (Nakane, 1974)

- (1) those people within one's own group;
- (2) those whose background is fairly well known;
- (3) those who are unknown.

The first category includes people with whom one has daily constant interaction such as members of one's family, peers and colleagues at work. Here the style of interaction is rather informal and the honorific forms which are used by inferiors when speaking to superiors become minimal. As a personal relationship becomes more distant, the style and the usage of the pronoun become more formal. In other words Japanese requires linguistic forms according to what position a hearer is in and whether he is inside or outside the speaker's group. This ability requires a fine awareness on the part of the speaker about his relationship with the hearer, and whether the hearer belongs to the same social rank or is inside or outside his group.

II PERSONAL PRONOUNS*

It is easy to conclude, by a quick examination, that English pronouns and their equivalents in Japanese behave in the same way

* Some analyse Japanese personal pronouns as “terms for self” and “address terms” instead of as “first, second and third person pronouns”.

syntactically. But this is not so. Consider the following examples:

- (1) kireina onnanoko (a beautiful girl)
 (2) kireina kanojo (a beautiful *she*)

In Japanese adjectives modify personal pronouns directly, just as they do nouns. They do not have special inflections as in English, but they work in sentences according to suffixes which are added to the pronouns:

- (3) I $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} wa \\ ga \end{array} \right.$ my watashi-no me $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} o \\ ni \end{array} \right.$ mine watashi-nomono

The following is a list of Japanese personal pronouns which might be used in modern daily life.

Table 1. Some Japanese Personal Pronouns

	<u>Singular</u>	<u>Plural</u>	
I	{ (w)atakushi (w)atashi	(w)atakushi (w)atashi	} + domo
		(w)atakushi (w)atashi	
	{ boku ore washi uchi etc.	boku ore washi uchi wareware etc.	} + ra / tachi
II	{ an(a)ta kimi omae kisama etc.	an(a)ta an(a)ta kimi omae kisama etc.	} + gata + ra / tachi
III	{ kare kanojo	kare kanojo	} + ra / tachi

When personal pronouns are required, the listed ones are not always used. This is especially true for the third person pronouns;

kare or *kanojo* might not appear as often as the others. Instead, combinations of demonstrative pronouns + noun — *ano hito* (that man / woman), *sono hito* (the man / woman), as listed below, could be used:

<u>Singular</u>		<u>Plural</u>															
<div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;"> <table style="border: none;"> <tr><td style="padding-right: 5px;">sono</td><td rowspan="3" style="font-size: 2em; vertical-align: middle;">}</td><td rowspan="3" style="padding: 0 10px;">+ kata / hito / ko</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding-right: 5px;">ano</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding-right: 5px;">kono</td></tr> </table> </div>	sono	}	+ kata / hito / ko	ano	kono		<div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;"> <table style="border: none;"> <tr><td style="padding-right: 5px;">sono</td><td rowspan="3" style="font-size: 2em; vertical-align: middle;">}</td><td rowspan="3" style="padding: 0 10px;">+ ra / tachi</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding-right: 5px;">ano</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding-right: 5px;">kono</td></tr> </table> </div>	sono	}	+ ra / tachi	ano	kono	<div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;"> <table style="border: none;"> <tr><td style="padding-right: 5px;">{kata</td><td rowspan="3" style="font-size: 2em; vertical-align: middle;">}</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding-right: 5px;">hito</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding-right: 5px;">ko</td></tr> </table> </div>	{kata	}	hito	ko
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sono	}	+ ra / tachi															
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aitsu	}			+ ra / tachi													
soitsu																	
koitsu																	
aitsu	}	+ ra / tachi															
soitsu																	
koitsu																	
etc.		etc.															

The reason might be two fold: originally *kare* and *kanojo* meaning ‘boyfriend’ and ‘girlfriend’ respectively. This connotative meaning still exists to some extent in Japanese today; and the terms *kare* and *kanojo* give the feeling of a direct translation from western languages, which results in making Japanese sentences awkward or non-Japanese sounding.

Another specific feature is that in Japanese first name or family name with or without title (depending on intimacy or position) will sometimes be used instead of personal pronouns.

- (4) *Kore wa Yamada san to Yamada san no tomodachi no shyashin desu.* (This is a picture of Mr. Yamada’s and Mr. Yamada’s friends’.)

III AIMS

The aims of this paper are two fold: first, to find out the kind of personal pronouns used by a particular group of Japanese and second, to interpret the way in which members of this group use these pronouns. The specific aims are to provide an explanation

of:

- (1) how status, sex, age or group work as determinates as suggested in the Introduction;
- (2) how and when personal pronouns are omitted; and finally
- (3) what characteristic features we can deduce from the choice of personal pronouns.

IV SUBJECTS

The conclusions of this study would have been more valid and meaningful if the numbers of the subjects studied had been much larger, but due to my inability to get more data from subjects of various backgrounds, this study has to be limited.

The subjects were 83 students of Sakaide High School in Kagawa Prefecture. More details about them is given in the following table:

Table 2 Details of the Subjects

	First Year Students (16 years old)	Second Year Students (17 years old)	Total
<u>Male</u>	17	18	35
<u>Female</u>	25	23	48
<u>Total</u>	42	41	83

V METHOD

The method I employed in collecting the data was by getting 89 subjects to answer a questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered in March, 1976. After eliminating those that showed too many omissions, only 83 copies were actually examined.

The reason I decided to select High School students as subjects was that I felt that data from the younger generation would reveal

the use of personal pronouns in new and specific ways on the one hand, and the use of more traditional forms, on the other. Besides, I expected that the Senior High School students would tend to respond more accurately than those from lower grades. The questionnaire opened with inquiries pertaining to sex, age, vocation of household head. All replies were anonymous.

I also looked into the High School student's family structure by asking numbers of brothers and sisters as well as of all the other members. The study revealed two types of families: nuclear and extended. They are presented in percentage term in Table 3, which shows that the three fifths of the subjects came from the nuclear family:

Table 3 Types of Family

	First Year Students		Second Year Students		Total
	<u>M</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>F</u>	
Nuclear	9	14	11	15	49
Extended	8	11	7	8	34

VI RESULTS

As shown in Table 1, there is a large number of personal pronouns in Japanese. Here, 18 pronouns and nouns for first person are reported by the subjects: *watakushi*, *watashi*, *boku*, *ore*, *jibun*, *uchi*, *watakushitachi*, *wataskushira*, *watashitachi*, *watashira*, *bokutachi*, *bokura*, *oretachi*, *orera*, *jibuntachi*, *jibunra*, *uchira* and name. And 18 pronouns and nouns for second person were also reported: *anata*, *anta*, *kimi*, *omae*, *anatagata*, *anatatachi*, *anataru*, *anatagata*, *antatachi*, *antara*, *kimitachi*, *kimira*, *omaetachi*, *amaera*,

senpai, *kisamatachi*, *temera*, name.

Among them *jibun* (myself), *senpai* (senior) or name should best not be regarded as pronouns. Also excluded are such forms as *kisamatachi* and *temera* which were mentioned very infrequently. As typical plural suffixes in Japanese, there are *tachi*, *ra*, *gata*. Though there is a delicate difference of nuance among them, in this project I considered them under the same suffix, and listed all pronouns as follows:

Table 4 List of Personal Pronouns used by Subjects

	<u>Singular</u>	<u>Plural</u>
First person	watakushi	watakushi + ra (or tachi)
	watashi	watashi + ra (or tachi)
	boku	boku + ra (or tachi)
	ore	ore + ra (or tachi)
	uchi	uchi + ra
Second person	anata	anata + ra (or tachi / gata)
	anta	anta + ra (or tachi / gata)
	kimi	kimi + ra (or tachi)
	omae	omae + ra (or tachi)

In first person group, *watakushi* is considered as the most polite form and then *watashi*, both of which are generally used by male-adults and all females. But males often use *boku* which is more polite than *ore*, even when he is grown up. *Uchi* is a kind of non-standard form used by females in the western part of Japan. In second person group, *anata* is more polite than *anta*. But *kimi* is also a polite form used for peers or younger persons. *Omae* is usually used to lower ranked people.

Besides these 18 forms used by the subjects, two items, 'avoidance' of the pronouns and 'others' which include all the less frequent forms, were added. The following tables show the percentage of

the choice of the first person pronouns by the subjects when they speak to the people listed on the left hand side of each table:

Table 5

Choice of First Person Pronouns by 35 Males in Speaking to:

	<u>Singular</u>				<u>Plural</u>			
	<u>boku</u>	<u>ore</u>	<u>others</u>	<u>avoid</u>	<u>bokura</u>	<u>orera</u>	<u>others</u>	<u>avoid</u>
Teacher	88%	9%	3%	0%	68%	11%	20%	0%
Parent	54	37	3	5	45	37	14	3
Older relative	88	8	3	0	71	11	17	0
Younger relative	51	45	0	3	45	37	17	0
Older stranger	80	0	20	0	74	3	23	0
Younger stranger	57	34	8	0	65	25	10	0
Older student	80	14	5	0	63	11	25	0
Younger student	17	82	0	0	20	65	14	0
Male friend	17	83	0	0	20	80	0	0
Female friend	62	34	3	0	57	25	8	0
Close friend	17	80	3	0	17	68	15	0

Table 6
Choice of First Person Pronouns by 48 Females in Speaking to:

	<u>Singular</u>				<u>Plural</u>				
	<u>watashi</u>	<u>uchi</u>	<u>others</u>	<u>avoid</u>	<u>watakushira</u>	<u>watashira</u>	<u>uchira</u>	<u>others</u>	<u>avoid</u>
Teacher	93%	0%	6%	0%	8%	91%	0%	0%	0%
Parent	52	20	3	25	2	72	20	0	6
Older relative	79	8	0	12	4	83	4	0	8
Younger relative	79	8	0	12	2	85	4	2	6
Older stranger	95	2	0	2	2	91	2	2	2
Younger stranger	95	2	0	2	2	94	2	0	2
Older student	93	2	2	2	4	89	2	2	0
Younger student	87	8	0	4	4	89	2	0	4
Male friend	95	4	0	0	2	92	4	0	2
Female friend	85	12	0	2	2	85	8	0	4
Close friend	85	12	0	2	2	79	16	0	2

In Table 5, 'others' in singular include *watakushi*, *jibun* and those in plural *watakushira*, *watashira*, *jibunra*, etc.

The following tables show the percentage of the choice of second person pronouns the subjects use when they speak to the persons listed.

Table 7
Choice of Second Person Pronouns by 35 Males in Speaking to:

	<u>Singular</u>					<u>Plural</u>					
	<u>anata</u>	<u>anta</u>	<u>kimi</u>	<u>omae</u>	<u>avoid</u>	<u>anatara</u>	<u>antara</u>	<u>kimira</u>	<u>omaera</u>	<u>others</u>	<u>avoid</u>
Parent	2%	0%	0%	5%	93%	2%	5%	0%	0%	11%	82%
Uncle/aunt	5	2	0	2	88	2	5	0	2	0	88
Teacher	5	5	0	0	88	3	0	0	2	2	88
Friend's parent	8	5	2	0	82	14	2	0	0	0	82
Male friend	2	0	2	71	22	0	0	2	57	2	37
Female friend	5	11	20	25	37	8	8	14	17	0	51
Close friend	0	2	2	74	20	0	0	2	68	0	28
Older student	11	8	0	2	79	14	8	0	8	0	68
Younger student	0	2	0	70	28	0	0	0	60	8	31

Table 8
Choice of Second Person Pronouns by
48 Females in Speaking to:

	<u>Singular</u>				<u>Plural</u>			
	<u>anata</u>	<u>anta</u>	<u>kimi</u>	<u>avoid</u>	<u>anatara</u>	<u>antara</u>	<u>kimira</u>	<u>avoid</u>
Parent	0%	0%	0%	100%	6%	0%	2%	91%
Uncle/ aunt	2	0	0	98	2	0	0	98
Teacher	4	0	0	96	8	0	0	92
Friend's parent	6	0	0	94	10	0	0	90
Male friend	18	6	4	62	25	12	2	61
Female friend	14	12	2	72	18	18	0	64
Close friend	8	22	2	68	10	20	2	68
Older student	14	0	0	86	20	2	0	78
Younger student	18	6	0	76	24	10	0	66

As is easily recognized, quite a lot of subjects avoid second person pronouns. This phenomenon will be referred to later.

The following is the results rearranged in terms of the frequency of choice of both kinds of pronouns:

Table 9
Mean Frequency of First Person Pronouns Usage

<u>MALE</u>				<u>FEMALE</u>			
<u>Singular</u>		<u>Plural</u>		<u>Singular</u>		<u>Plural</u>	
boku	56%	bakura	50%	watashi	85%	watashira	86%
ore	39	orera	34	uchi	7	uchira	6
others	4	others	14	avoid	5	avoid	4
avoid	1	avoid	1	others	3	watakushira	3
						others	1

Table 10

Mean Frequency of Second Person Pronouns Usage

MALE				FEMALE			
<u>Singular</u>		<u>Plural</u>		<u>Singular</u>		<u>Plural</u>	
avoid	60%	avoid	62%	avoid	94%	avoid	78%
omae	28	omaera	24	anata	10	anatara	14
anata	5	anatara	5	anta	5	antara	7
anta	4	antara	4	kimi	1	kimira	1
kimi	3	others	3				
		kimira	2				

These tables show quite interesting phenomena: male students do not use first person forms that can also be used by the female students and vice versa, however in second person pronouns, some of them are shared by both sexes but 'omae' is not. The avoidance of both groups of words is practiced by both sexes.

VII DISCUSSION

Here I would like to discuss the implication of the subject's choice and try to explain the phenomena observed above.

1. Hearer's Age and Status as Determinants

The subjects are High School students, so their age and status (as students) are consistent. Therefore, addressee's age and status are considered to be important. They are, as it were, two sides of the same coin. The choice of first person pronoun indicates a typical phenomenon of age and status as determinants. According to Table 5, when boys speak to relatives, strangers or older students, their selection of pronouns is clearly dependent upon the addressee's age, or status because it is often

the case that older relatives or strangers are higher in status than the subject—the student. In speaking to them, he chooses *boku* far more often than *ore*. The mean frequency of *boku* to them is 83%, whereas that of *ore* is 10%. He tries to express politeness toward superior by choosing *boku*, which is considered more polite than *ore*.

Another typical example is the high percentage of the choice of *boku* used to address teachers, because they are socially regarded as people from a high rank. Both sexes therefore use polite pronouns to address them: *boku* 88%; *watashi* 93%.

2. Hearer's Sex as a Determinant

The hearer's sex also seems to influence significantly the speaker's choice of a pronoun. According to Table 5, there is a difference of choice of first person pronouns by males when they speak to their fellow males—*boku*: 17%, *ore*: 83%—and to their female peers—*boku*: 62%, *ore*: 34%. This tendency is also backed up by the selection of second person pronouns. 71% of males call their male peers *omae*, whereas they call their female peers *anata*, *anta*, or *kimi*, all of which are considered as more polite forms than *omae*.

In comparing the pronouns used toward male and female friends chosen by both sexes, we have another interesting phenomenon. According to Table 6 female subjects use *watashi* almost as frequently in speaking to their peers of both sexes. Table 8 also shows that there is not much difference of choice of pronouns by females in speaking to their friends of both sexes. However, males differentiate the choice for each sex clearly.

This fact shows that boy students use much more polite forms

to their girl friends than they do to their fellow males, whereas girl students use more or less equal forms to their male and female peers. It has often been said that the Japanese male looks down upon, or has superior attitudes to Japanese women, and that the Japanese female is apt to feel inferior to male. However, this opinion is quite contrary to my observation.

3. Speaker's Sex as a Determinant

The speaker's sex also seems to determine to a considerable degree the choice of a pronoun. This phenomenon can clearly be explained by Table 9—Mean Frequency of First Person Pronoun Usage, which shows a clear-cut male / female distinction in the use of the forms—*boku*: 56%; *ore*: 39%; / *watashi*: 85%. They are not shared with both sexes.

In the use of second person pronouns, some of them are shared, though there is also a distinction because of the differences in frequency—*omae*: 28%; *anata*: 5% / *anata*: 10%; *anta*: 5%. This phenomenon requires more explanation. The unambiguous male/female distinction in the use of first person pronouns is a habit retained from their childhood. But once males go into society, they begin to cross the boundary of the distinction, because *watakushi* or *watashi* is considered more polite than *boku* or *ore* and has a wide range of usage. Females do not tend to change their use of them. Probably they continue to use *uchi*, a dialectal form, because it is mainly used among their families and relatives, according to my data. In the use of second person pronouns, *omae* is used quite frequently by male students, but male adults usually do not use it any more, except to their family members, and begin to cross the boundary

so often that *anata* increases in number, because it is a more polite form. (Japanese society outside the academic circle is more strictly stratified.) Here it is worth mentioning that the crossing of the sex boundary in the use of personal pronouns is made by males, but seldom by females. One reason could be due to the fact that Japanese women are more conservative and do not break conventions of usage easily, whereas, the men are more innovative. Another reason could be that because men work outside the family they need to differentiate among their hearers, depending on their social rank and status. Even one slip in the choice of appropriate form of address could lead to drastic consequences like making him lose an important job.

4. Group as a Determinant

It is also often said that the Japanese live in a group-centred world in which the individual is made keenly aware of who the outsider is. Here let us see how personal relationship works as a factor in selecting pronouns. I have taken as typical people within one's group, close friends of a boy or girl, and, as typical people outside the group, older strangers. (I admit that the latter contains also other important factors such as sex, age and status.) The following is how frequently the subjects use first person pronouns in speaking to their close friends and older strangers:

	MALE				FEMALE			
	<u>Singular</u>		<u>Plural</u>		<u>Singular</u>		<u>Plural</u>	
Close friend	ore	80%	orera	68%	watashi	85%	watashira	79%
	boku	17	bokura	17	uchi	12	uchira	16
Older stranger	boku	80	bokura	74	watashi	95	watashira	91
	ore	0	orera	3	uchi	2	uchira	2

As it is shown, both sexes use more polite forms to strangers than to close friends. When the Japanese speak to the outsiders, they choose more polite terms to them than to the insiders. Especially a conspicuous difference of use is reported by boys. Girl's usage is rather stable, but a dialectal form *uchi* is less frequent in use in speaking to strangers.

5. Avoidance

One of the remarkable phenomena of the choice of Japanese personal pronouns is the avoidance of certain personal pronouns. Especially, second person pronouns to any body are omitted quite frequently by other sexes. This phenomenon is worth looking at in greater detail.

More avoidance of first person pronouns is practiced by females—25% to family and 12% to relatives. This does not mean that they do not use any forms referring to themselves at all, but some younger Japanese females tend to call themselves by their first names—“Jun ni chodai” (“Give to Jun” instead of “Give to me”.)

Second person pronouns are also omitted more often by females than by males, but the frequencies of avoidance among males are higher. According to the data, we can say about 90% of males / females omit second pronouns referring to parent(s), uncle or /and aunt, teacher(s) and older student(s). One of the reasons is that in Japanese a speaker tends to omit a pronoun when he and his hearer understand clearly who the person referred to by the pronoun is. Another main reason is that a speaker frequently uses kinship terms indicating status instead of using a second person pronoun—*otosan* (father), *okasan*

(mother), *otosantachi* (father and mother), *ojisan* (uncle), *obasan* (aunt), *ojisantachi* (uncle and aunt), etc. Or, instead of a pronoun, a speaker frequently calls a hearer by his first or family name with title (to superiors) or without title (to peers or subordinates), even when the hearer stands just in front of the speaker. These phenomena can be seen not only in the use of the first and second person pronouns, but also in the use of third person pronouns: only 3 out of 83 subjects answered 'yes' to the question 'Do you use he, she or they, when you refer to a member / members of your family?.'

The following are the results of how subjects choose third person pronouns in sentences:

- (a) Kino kochosensei to (1. kare no 2. sono hito no 3. kochosensei no 4. sono 5. nashi) okusan ga kaimono o sareteiru-no o mimashita. / Yesterday I saw the principal and (1. his 2. that man's 3. the principal's 4. that 5. none) wife shopping.

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Male	8%	0%	48%	2%	42%
Female	0%	2%	52%	6%	39%

- (b) Nichiyo ni Ken to (1. kare no 2. sono hito no 3. Ken no 4. aitsu no 5. nashi) tomodachi go ieni kuru. / On Sunday Ken and (1. his 2. that man's 3. Ken's 4. that fellow's 5. none) friends visit my house.

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Male	14%	0%	5%	28%	53%
Female	29%	0%	6%	10%	54%

- (c) Haha no rusu ni (1. kanojo no 2. haha no 3. sono hito no 4. are no 5. nashi) tomodachi dato yu hito ga tazunetekita. / Whilst my mother was away, a woman visited who was (1. her 2. my mother's 3. that woman's 4. that 5. none) old friend.

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Male	5%	85%	0%	0%	8%
Female	4%	91%	0%	0%	4%

- (d) Asu wa ototo no tanjobi de, (1. kare wa 2. ototo wa 3. aitsu wa 4. are wa 5. nashi) (1. kare no 2. ototo no 3. aitsu no 4. jibun no 5. nashi) tomodachi to party o suruto-yu. / Tomorrow is my brother's birthday, and (1. he 2. my brother 3. that fellow 4. that 5. none) will have a party with (1. his 2. my brother's 3. that fellow's 4. his own 5. none) friends.

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Male	5%	25%	28%	8%	31%
Female	4%	22%	20%	33%	37%

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Male	14%	28%	34%	0%	22%
Female	20%	50%	10%	0%	18%

As shown with the percentage, third person pronouns are also omitted frequently and, instead, kinship term or nouns indicating status are in frequent use.

In other words, while the Japanese speaking world has kinship terms, names and pronouns, it does not need any of them to as great a degree as the English speaking world does. In En-

glish one cannot carry on a conversation without pronouns, but the Japanese can speak perfectly well with minimal reliance on pronouns and are quite comfortable even if they cannot remember the hearer's name.

VIII CONCLUSION

We have seen how a speaker's and/or a hearer's sex, age, status, group determine the choice of Japanese personal pronouns, and have demonstrated that all of these factors are crucial to the choice.

Samuel E. Martin says in his "Speech Levels in Japanese and Korean" that in both languages Japanese and Korean there are two axes of distinction: the Axis of Reference and the Axis of Address. The first axis consists of humble, neutral or exalted expressions whose choice "depends primarily on the speaker's attitude toward the subject of the expression". The second axis is subcategorised into plain, polite and deferential style and their choice "depends on the speaker's attitude toward the person that he is addressing". (S. Martin, pp. 408-409) These two axes influence a speaker's choice of copula and other verb forms as well as his choice of honorific prefixes. These factors interact with each other as well as with the use of personal pronouns and all this makes Japanese expression very complicated indeed.

As has been mentioned before, our data reveals conspicuous differences in the choice of personal pronouns by males and females. We may also note that the language behaviour of Japanese girls seems to be relatively more stable than that of Japanese boys at least from the point of view of their use of first and second personal

pronouns. Generally speaking, male adults as well as boys have a large number of terms available for speaking especially in informal situations, such as the use of *boku*, *ore*, *kimi* or *omae*. Men also have available to them the plain forms of all tenses of verbs at the end of an utterance, and such particles as *zo* or *ze*. We may say that in everyday usage, women employ a greater number of polite forms than men, but men have a wider choice of different forms for the same levels of informality. The polite forms that women use in an informal context are used by men as well, but only when speaking at a higher level of informality. If we take into consideration the axis of address and the axis of reference as well as different kinds of pronouns, we can arrive at five degrees of levels of usage, which show differences in the speech of men and women: (Goldstein, pp. 112-113).

Male	Female
formal	formal
semi-formal	semi-formal
informal	informal
casual	casual
non-standard	non-standard

Informal, casual and non-standard forms in men's speech are not available in women's speech.

The following examples show the larger number of forms available to men. The meaning of all the examples is 'I will read for you'.

- | <u>Female</u> | <u>Male</u> |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Watakushi ga yonde sashiagemasho. | } Same as for female |
| 2. Watakushi ga oyomi itashimasho. | |

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| 3. Watashi ga oyomi itashimasho. | } Sentences 3, 4, and 5 may be used by male, as well the same sentences with the subject replaced by <i>boku</i> . |
| 4. Watashiga oyomi shimasho. | |
| 5. Watashi ga yonde agemasho. | |
| 6. Watashi ga yondeageruwa. | } Sentence 6 and 7 can be said in 4 different ways by male:
Boku ga yonde ageruyo.
Boku ga yonde ageyo.
Boku ga yonde yaro.
Ore ga yonde yaro. |
| 7. Watashi ga yonde yaruwa. | |
| 8. Uchi ga younde agyo. | |
| Washi ga yonde yaro. | |

Another interesting finding is that the Japanese use not only personal pronouns but also various terms, such as kinship terms, names, nouns indicating status etc. quite often. For example, in a family a man uses *otosan* or *papa* (father) in referring to himself in speaking to his children, but he uses *sensei* (teacher) in speaking to students in his class, if he is a teacher. Or, he calls himself *ojisan* (uncle) in speaking to children in his neighbourhood and is called *ojisan* by them. In Japanese, terms which are used by a speaker to refer to himself or a hearer are more complicated than they appear. Personal pronouns too are in less frequent use as there are other ways of addressing people, as mentioned above.

All these features are very interesting from a sociolinguistic point of view—not just based on this study of personal pronouns, but also kinship terms, status and all other features which are significant in the choice of forms between speaker and hearer—because they seem to reflect certain special characteristics of the way in which Japanese people interact with each other in day to day situations. It is as if the Japanese speaker ‘jumps out of his own skin’ and looks at himself from the point of his addressee.

The fact that a number of terms used by a speaker in his

everyday life, fulfilling different roles in Japanese society, has been exemplified by Dr. Suzuki. (pp. 8-66) He has tried to show that one of the important factors in the choice of form of address is the differentiation between superior and subordinate. The important factor of the differentiation is "age". According to him, we can say:

- (1) the speaker cannot use personal pronouns to address superiors but he uses kinship terms, like 'father' etc.,
- (2) the speaker cannot use kinship terms to address subordinates,
- (3) the speaker cannot address superiors by their names, but he can address subordinates by their names,
- (4) when the speaker is a young girl, she refers to herself by her first name in speaking to superiors or peers, but not to subordinates,
- (5) in speaking to subordinates, the speaker can refer to himself by the kinship terms which the hearer would use in addressing the speaker, but in speaking to superiors, he cannot.

The same principle of address in a family also obtains in a society.

There is one more interesting phenomenon worth mentioning. That is called 'Empathetic Identification'—a speaker does not see himself from his own standpoint, but from the third person's standpoint. A typical example is: in a Japanese family it is quite often seen that a wife calls her husband *otosan* (father). That means, she looks at him from the children's viewpoint, and identifies herself with the children, therefore she is allowed to call her husband 'father'.

This study has shown how the hierarchical organisation of society at every level into superiors and subordinates, and factors such as sex, age, and group membership determine the choice of personal pronouns of address. This study has also demonstrated how and when personal pronouns are omitted and what kinds of linguistic items can be used as substitutes. This study has specially highlighted the differences between men and women in their choice of various forms of address.

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