

The speaker's viewpoint and indexicality in a high context culture*

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Abstract

Linguistic and pragmatic features prevalent in high context cultures such as the omission of subjects and objects, varieties of personal pronouns, sentence final particles, varieties of modal suffixes and honorifics have been paid little attention in academic discussions to date. It is because they are outside the scope of the established discipline based on the societies and languages of North America and Europe. The aim of this paper is to seek a new framework that will encompass and give a coherent account of the workings of the neglected features mentioned above. It is only by assuming a speaker's viewpoint that is embedded in the context that one can explain how the linguistic features employed (or omitted) match the context and fulfill an essential pragmatic function of indexicality and reflexivity in a high context culture.

Key words: high context culture, speaker's viewpoint, indexicality, reflexivity, honorifics

要旨

高コンテキスト文化の談話によく見られる主語、目的語の脱落、人称詞の変種の多さ、終助詞、モダリティ表現、敬語は個々の言語・語用論現象として論じられることはあっても、包括的な説明はこれまでほとんどされることがなかった。本論では、これらを包括的に説明するために、日本語の例をもとに高コンテキスト文化においては話し手の視点がコンテキストに内在していることを低コンテキスト文化の英語話者との対比で明らかにする。コンテキストの中に視点を置く話し手には、コンテキストで自明な情報は言わないが、話し手の位置や役割、人間関係、気持ち、態度などを言語の指標的機能で表明することが義務的になる。

キーワード：高コンテキスト文化、話し手の視点、指標性、再帰性、敬語

1. Introduction

"Although linguists, liberally inspired, may wish to ignore differences in evaluation and appropriateness, ... social reality does not. The very choice of a variety conveys meaning and affects the meanings that can be conveyed" (Hymes 1986:52).

This passage by Hymes highlights the importance of the speaker's choice among a variety of possibilities. In a culture where context plays a big role in speaking, this manifests itself as the necessity for the speaker to make appropriate choices to match the context. This involves the indexing function of language.

Hall (1976) observed in *Beyond culture* that in high context cultures such as those of East Asia, most of the meaningful information in interactional communication is in the context, which is not only shared by the speaker and the hearer, but also internalized in their cognition.

It is generally known that some East Asian languages have varieties of choices among personal pronouns, honorifics, sentence final particles and other modal morphemes, and omission of subjects and objects. However, little has been discussed in the academic community as to the reason why there are so many varieties and choices to make. There seems to be no appropriate framework to take up these linguistic or pragmatic phenomena. Most of the working frameworks prevalent today are based on the societies and the languages of North America and Europe. Since the linguistic and pragmatic phenomena listed above are not features of these languages, they simply fall outside of their scope.

This paper, therefore, aims at seeking a new framework that will encompass and explain the workings of some of the neglected linguistic and pragmatic phenomena of high context cultures, in this case Japanese.

2. The speaker's viewpoint in a high context culture

2.1. Why subjects are omitted in Japanese: The case of a novel

Japanese discourse shows characteristics of a high context culture. Most of the meaningful information is in the context and is shared by the speaker and the hearer, and therefore, only the new information needs to be stated. It is usually obvious who is speaking to

whom in the context of an exchange, so there is no need to say 'I' and 'you' in Japanese discourse. Takahashi (2000: 9-10) compared the presence and absence of personal pronouns used as subjects in Kawabata (1950)'s novel *The Izu Dancer* and in its English translation. Figure 1 below shows the occurrence of personal pronouns in Japanese discourse as compared with the occurrence of personal pronouns in the English translation. Here, the percentage shows the rate of non-appearance of pronouns in Japanese when English pronouns are used. We see from this figure that the second person pronouns are the most likely to be omitted, followed by the omission of first person pronouns. Even third person pronouns are sometimes omitted in Japanese.

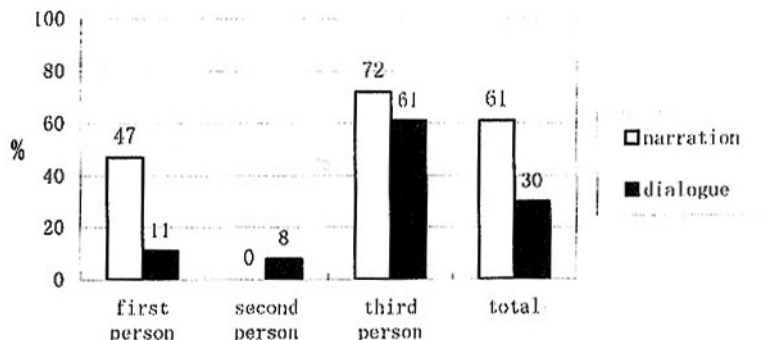


Figure 1. The percentage of use of Japanese personal pronoun subjects in cases where the English version shows usage (=100%)

Figure 2 and Figure 3 are based on a scene from *The Izu Dancer*. The elder sister of the dancer says (1), while the same utterance is translated into English as (2).

(1) (*Kare wa*) = ϕ *Kootoogakkoo no gakusei-san*
 He SUB high school GEN student HON

(*desu*) = ϕ *yo.*
 COP ADD HON SFP

(2) He is a high school boy.

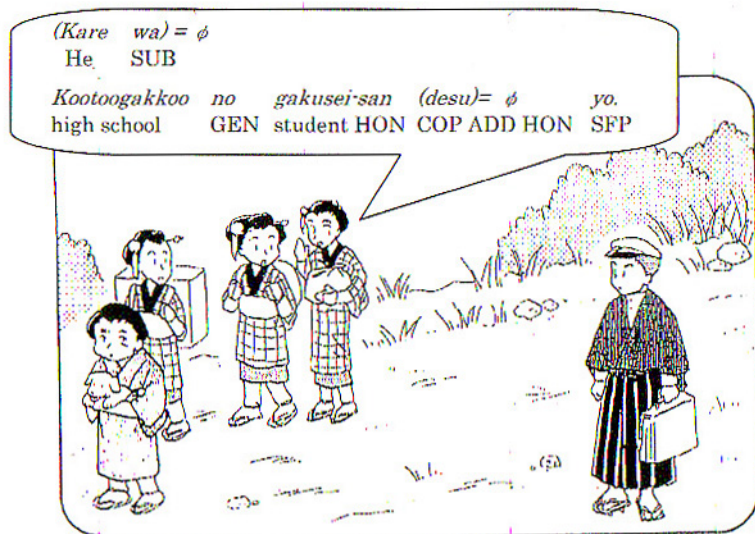


Figure 2. A scene from *The Izu Dancer* from the Japanese speaker's view point

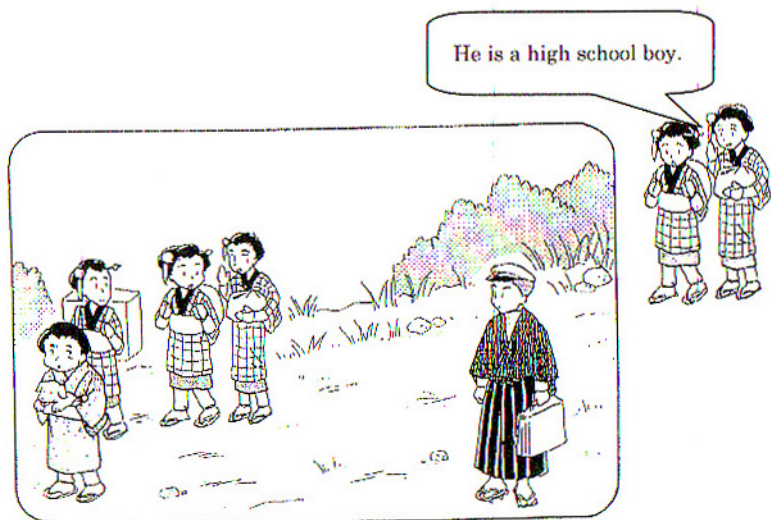


Figure 3. A scene from *The Izu Dancer* from the English speaker's view point

No subject¹ is expressed in (1), while in (2), the subject 'he' is present. Figure 1 showed the extent to which the first and second person pronouns were omitted in the Japanese original because they are usually clear from the context. Here is the illustration of the fact that even the third person pronouns can be omitted. What is the explanation for this?

A key may be found by looking at other cases of divergence in the expression of elements in equivalent utterances in Japanese and in English. There are, in fact, some elements that are expressed in Japanese that have no English counterpart. English does not express an equivalent of the honorific title of the student '*san*,' nor the final particle '*yo*,' which shows the speaker's attitude toward the utterance. Through the employment of these two linguistic features, the speaker is showing both admiration toward the referent, a high school boy, by the use of the honorific title '*san*,' and assurance in giving information to her younger sister (who does not hold the information) by using the final particle '*yo*.' It should be also noted that copula ('*desu*') is deleted, which means that the speaker indexes the situational context as informal. This illustrates the fact that speaking in Japanese requires indexing the speaker's attitude toward various elements in the context, such as the sense of place and the speaker's sensitivity or feeling. On the other hand, the speaker in English is stating the propositional content in what appears to be a purely objective fashion and nothing more; no overt reference to the context is made. Of course, one can suppose the attitude or feeling of the speaker by the tone of voice in verbal interactions, but this is a novel, and one can only deduce the tone of voice from what is written.

What is important here are the differences between this short utterance in Japanese and its equivalent in English. In Japanese, it is not obligatory to have a subject in an utterance, but it is obligatory to index the interactional relationship among the participants and the speaker's attitude toward the hearer. Thus, the speaker indexes her relationship with the referent, the high school boy, by means of an honorific marker '*san*,' and her relationship with her younger sister, the hearer, with no copula which indexes an informal context, showing the intimacy of their relationship. In English, it is grammatically obligatory to state the subject of an utterance, while it is not obligatory to index the relationship

among the participants or the speaker's attitude.

In discussing a number of narratives or examples of discourse, various concepts have been used to describe the speaker's schema, concepts such as 'participation schemas' (Palmer 1996), 'participant frameworks' (Goodwin 1990), 'participation frameworks' (Schiffrin 1993) or 'voice in the text' (Hanks 1989). But these concepts are not sufficient to encompass all of the differences in obligatory elements of discourse in Japanese and English.

The explanation for the divergence of supposedly equivalent utterances in Japanese and English can only be found on the meta-pragmatic level, for it is at that level that the differences in the speaker's viewpoints can be analyzed, a topic which will be discussed further in section 3.

2.2. Why subjects and objects are omitted in Japanese: The case of the narrative

Yanagimachi (2000:14-15) offers further material that illustrates the differences in the speakers' viewpoints in English and Japanese. The following narratives were told by a native speaker of Japanese and by a native speaker of English who was learning Japanese in the intermediate class. Both speakers were shown a two minutes animation video, and were then asked to tell the story to a third person, someone who had not seen the video.

The story: An old couple adopts a baby and they love the baby so much that the dog, which had previously been well cared for, became jealous. The dog tried to get the attention of the couple by cleaning rooms and doing the dishes, but it did not work. The dog ran away from home.

(3) Narrative by a Japanese

(*inu wa*) *samishii omoi o shite* ϕ (=dog) *sooji toka*
 (dog SUB) lonely feeling O do and clean such as

ato shokki arai toka hajimeru n desu kedo
 and do the dishes such as begin NOM COP but

'(The dog) felt lonely and began to clean the room and do the dishes, but...'

ϕ (=couple) *amari nimo kamat te-kure nai mon da kara*
 so much care receive NEG NOM COP because

♪ (=dog) *katteni* *iede* *o*
 in a self-serving manner run away from home O

shi te-shimatte...

do have done with the speaker's feeling of regret

'Since (the dog) did not receive care by (the couple) so much that (the dog) has run away from home (narrated by the speaker) with the feeling of regret...'

(4) Narrative by a native speaker of English learning Japanese, currently at an intermediate level

Ano uchi no inu wa akachan o miru to
 Uh of the house GEN dog SUB baby O see when

kanashisoo ni-nari masu.
 sad-looking become ADD HON

'Uh, dog of the house becomes sad-looking when it sees the baby.'

obaasan to ojisan wa akachan to asonde anoo
 old woman and old man SUB baby with play and uh

inu wa sooji suru anoo sooji nado shi-tei masu.
 dog SUB clean do uh clean such as doing ADD HON

'Old woman and old man are playing with the baby, and, uh, the dog is doing such things as cleaning the room.'

ojisan to obaasan wa inu o mi mase n.
 old man and old woman SUB dog O care ADD HON NEG

'Old man and old woman do not take care of the dog.'

anoo inu wa uchi o de masu.
 uh dog SUB home from leave ADD HON

'Uh, the dog leaves home.'

It should be noted that, in the retelling by the Japanese native speaker, there were no referent nouns, while the Japanese learner used 7 subjects, 2 objects and 2 other referent nouns. As the result of not expressing 11 reference nouns, the narrative by the Japanese speaker (3) is much shorter than (4). Should this be interpreted as imperfect Japanese language learning by the native speaker of English? No, as nothing seems actually wrong with the narrative (4). The propositional content of the narratives is the

same in both (3) and (4). If both are correct and convey the same prepositional content, then what difference is there between them?

By identifying with and, as it were, taking the position of the dog in the narrative, the speaker of (3) relies on the context to provide the information which would otherwise require the use of referent nouns. The speaker also indexes the actions of the couple by adding an auxiliary verb of receiving with negation (*'te-kure nai*) as a modal expression, or a suffix (*'te-shimatte...*) to the verb. The auxiliary verb of receiving in the negative form (*'te-kure nai*) added to the verb meaning 'care for' expresses the speaker's feeling of regret. This feeling is conveyed because the auxiliary verb of not receiving indexes the direction of the old couple's care toward the dog. Likewise, the suffix (*'te-simatte*) is a modal auxiliary verb that expresses a feeling of regret at the end of the story. This is how the narrator's empathy with the story's protagonist is expressed and thus gives dramatic tone to the narrative.

On the other hand, in (4), the story is told as a straightforward recounting of the facts. The addressee honorifics, which index the speaker's formal attitude toward the hearer and the situation, are used 4 times, but indexing information to the context is lacking. The narrator maintains a distance from the speech event and tells the story from what could be termed an objective viewpoint.

3. Two types of speakers' viewpoints

The overall impressions created by these two narratives are drastically different, a fact which seems to stem from the point of view of the speaker. The discrepancy found in the occurrence or non-occurrence of the referent nouns in narratives told by the Japanese native speaker and the Japanese learner only makes sense if it is understood as differences in the speakers' viewpoints. Now, going back to the case of the novel, the different positions of the speaker's eyes in Figure 2 and Figure 3 are noticeable. These pictures show that Japanese is uttered with the speaker's eye in the scene (Figure 2), while English is uttered with the speaker's eye overlooking the scene from the outside (Figure 3).

This often mentioned difference in viewpoints was described by the geologist Suzuki (1978) in *Thinking in the Forest, Thinking in the Desert*. He writes that the East Asian viewpoint is that of the person in the forest, while the Western viewpoint is the birds'

eye view, overlooking the scene from high in the sky. While the view in the forest, lacking the overall perspective of the scene, focuses attention on that which is in the immediate vicinity of the speaker, the view from the sky captures the whole scene and describes what is happening in the scene in a distanced or objective fashion. In the former, it is obligatory to include in the discussion of the scene an indication of the speaker-hearer relationship, the speaker's attitude, sensitivity toward the formality of the setting and a variety of other factors, while in the latter, it is obligatory to state objective or incontrovertible facts.

This may have given the impression that this is but another, albeit new, dichotomy. The truth is, however, quite the opposite. The first step has been to use observed differences to highlight a difference in viewpoints that has been neglected in Western oriented scholarship. Should anyone be thinking that this is nothing new, that different viewpoints can also be taken as a basis in discourse in Western languages, then this approach has indeed been successful. It is highly likely that many, perhaps most, languages have both perspectives, but it is not a topic on which linguistic scholarship to date has been focused. The second point is that, in some languages, discourse more prototypically involves employing the view from within the forest, while in other languages, discourse proceeds along the lines of the view from above.

This may seem a somewhat long-winded or laborious attempt to illustrate rather simple differences in speaking in high context and low context cultures. The true gain will become apparent when it is realized how difficult it has proven to be to describe accurately the use of honorifics in the daily life of the Japanese, and when the preceding discussion is applied to this topic.

4. The creation of social harmony through the indexical and reflexive functions of Japanese honorifics

4.1. Honorific use revisited

There does not yet appear to be an explanation or interpretation of the Japanese use of honorifics that seems accurate and exhaustive to speakers of that language. Something has always seemed to be missing. In fact, so much attention has been paid to honorifics that other features that are at least equally important for the under-

standing of the pragmatics of discourse in Japanese have not been investigated.

An historical digression may help to illustrate the important aspects of honorific use. After WW II, when the United States helped Japan adopt a new, democratic constitution, the leading linguists of the time discussed and presented the guideline² for the use of honorifics in the new, democratic society, where everybody was supposed to be equal. Honorifics have been and generally still are interpreted as Irvine (1998:62) has done. She examined the honorifics of Javanese, Wolof, Zulu, and ChiBemba, and concluded that honorifics accompany a linguistic ideology that specifies such features as rank and power. Since Japan set about changing its society into a democratic one reflecting the ideal model constitution, the first thing linguists suggested was to abolish the honorific use of personal pronouns and they recommended the exclusive use of '*watashi*' and '*anata*' as the first and second person pronouns. They had hoped that the Japanese people would have an equivalent of 'I' and 'you' that could be used regardless of who they were and to whom they were speaking. No rank or power difference whatsoever! However, it did not work. Not only that, but despite the persistent use of honorifics, the country flourished in its own way. The fact that Japan was able to become a democratic country despite the fact that they continued use of variety of personal pronouns and other honorifics seems to indicate that the use of honorifics has not been properly analyzed and interpreted by the current frameworks or academic tools.

As a first step toward understanding the use of honorifics in a way more similar to the understanding speakers of Japanese have, the idea of language as a tool with a smattering of ideology in it must be abandoned in favor of the view that language is embedded in the context in which not only the relationship of the participants, but also such features as their feelings and their attitude toward the situation and the speaker's self representation are all indexed by the use and non-use of linguistic forms.

4.2. How honorific use contributes to harmony in Japanese society

How do honorifics function in a democratic, highly developed technical society? The fact that honorifics continue to be used shows

that their use still makes sense in the workings of this modern society. In other words, if the use of honorifics accompanies the ideology of rank and power, or convention or low-affect, as Irvine (1998:62) explains, perhaps the abolition of honorifics would have contributed to the development of the contemporary Japanese society. In fact, a journalist from *The Financial Times* not long ago suggested the possibility of abolishing honorifics as a way to lift the Japanese economy out of its current depression.

Few native speakers of Japanese would agree with this journalist, since it is widely felt that honorifics are an integral part of the language, deeply embedded in our language and minds. The Japanese instinctively know that the use of honorifics contributes to the creation and maintenance of harmony in the context in our society.

Harmony in Japanese is called '*wa*.' Its importance was explicitly stated in the first Japanese constitution, which appeared in the 7th century. Written by Prince Shoutoku (574-622 A.D.), Article 1 of the constitution says "Hold harmony in high esteem." This cannot be considered a constitution in our present sense, but is rather a system of moral precepts or rules intended to guide the conduct of government officials. Still, this statement on harmony holds so much weight as to determine the fundamental direction of Japanese thought.

The term '*wa*,' harmony, came from China, but it was developed in Japan in a unique way. According to the philosopher Sakamoto (1993:12), *The Analects of Confucius* teaches that "A wise man gets along well with others, i.e. to achieve '*wa*,' without becoming like them." But the word assumed a different nuance when it was imported to Japan. Here, '*wa*' took on the overriding connotation of 'assimilation,' initially among people, and later between the individual and society. Eventually, it came to mean the unity or merging of humanity and nature.

In the Tokugawa (Edo) Period, when the country closed itself for almost three centuries, Japanese indigenous philosophy emerged independent of the then prevalent Confucianism in China. Ethics or moral standards, called '*michi*,' i.e. ways, for samurai as well as for townsmen, were devised by those indigenous philosophers so that this closed country could work peacefully and smoothly within the limited space of this small island. One of the

'*michi*' for people to achieve '*wa*,' harmony, the key philosophy since Prince Shoutoku, was to place the peace of the society before that of the individual, and diligently exercise their expected roles, acknowledging individual places in the respective community.

Japan has undergone various influences from abroad and from within in the course of her historical development, but this philosophy of '*wa*,' harmony, from the time of Prince Shoutoku through the Tokugawa Period, continues to exert a strong influence on Japanese thinking and behavior even today.

One way to realize this philosophical concept of harmony in practice is through language. In speaking, one is supposed to index one's place in the community and one's relationship with the interactants together with the propositional content of the utterance. Thus, by indexing, one can acknowledge one's place both in relation to the community and in relation to other participants in the interaction. This indexing can be marked by various modal expressions.

As a result, the Japanese language developed a number of linguistic features that make an important contribution to this cultural goal of acknowledging the differences in the contextual elements. The use or non-use of varieties of personal pronouns, verbal auxiliaries of giving and receiving, and sentence final particles are but a few of the many linguistic features which are useful in indexing the place of the speaker and the relationship of the speaker and hearer, as well as the speaker's feeling and attitude.

Honorific usage, however, is the prime linguistic feature which effectively establishes a bond between people belonging to different places, roles and positions, and it does so by explicitly acknowledging those differences. In a society where the basic premise is that people are different with regard to their role, position, sex, age, and many other aspects relevant to the context of speaking, acknowledging these differences instead of neglecting them for the sake of a postulated equality is the way to create and maintain harmony. Because people are different, but are to be respected equally, a device that acknowledges these differences can bond people harmoniously. This is distinctly different from the goal of Western egalitarian idealism. While both traditions seek harmony, the ways employed to achieve it are different because of their differing historical and religious backgrounds.

The assimilation of the interactants to a unified unit with complementary role differences can be illustrated by the passage from *The Izu Dancer* already discussed. The speaker indexes her relative position toward the high school boy, who is the hero in this novel, as one of distance and respect by the use of the honorific title *'san'*. She also indexes her relative position toward her sister, the dancer, as one of closeness by the omission of an honorific form of the copula. The scene described in Figure 2 becomes integrated as the speaker makes explicit the differences in the relationships of the participants and this acknowledgment of the difference in positions and roles contributes to the creation of unity, of asymmetric harmony among participants of different backgrounds.

In the narratives discussed before, in (3), the narrative by the Japanese native speaker, while there is no indication of who does what to whom, the predication becomes explicit by the indexing of the verbal action realized by the receiving auxiliary verb *'te-kure nai'*, i.e. 'do not receive.' The use of *'te-kure nai'* characterizes the relationship of the dog to the old woman and man. It indexes the dog's attitude, namely that he feels he is due more attention than he is receiving. This indexing by the use of such modal auxiliaries creates bonding, and thus pulls towards assimilation of the interactants (the dog and the old woman and man). Thus, narrative (3) is much more integrated and dramatic than (4), which is the simple description of what happened to the dog.

The importance of the incorporation of the participants along with their societal roles and positions and their relationships to each other as well as their feelings and attitudes towards the propositional content of the communication into the concept of context cannot be overstated. Based on this incorporation of the other's position, one knows what to say as well as what not to say, since what is known by participants need not, and therefore should not be verbalized. One also knows how to say what one wants to say, since the context determines the indexing of the relationships by such means as honorifics and final particles. The primary goal of such meta-pragmatics is the creation and maintenance of harmony in the context.

Another part of culture, art, can perhaps make this clearer. In Western art, the beauty of symmetry is much appreciated. According to Sakamoto, "A consistent pursuit of symmetry and invariance

has undergirded Western thought and science ever since Archimedes. But Japanese flower arrangement forms clearly involve the impulse to deliberately destroy symmetry and uniformity. Buddhism teaches that everything constantly changes, and flower arrangement pursues ultimate forms that coordinate constantly changing manifestations of nature and bring them into an integral stability and harmony." In similar fashion, the use of honorifics functions to create integral stability by acknowledging the asymmetric nature of many if not most relationships. Even in a relationship where the participants have equal status, in Japanese discourse, the speaker usually displays humility and thus elevates the other interactant, while the hearer responds by displaying humility and elevating the other, thus creating harmony on a reciprocal basis.

A case of an asymmetric relationship is illustrated in the example of a scene at a college, where a professor and a student are talking and the professor suggests to the student that they go to lunch. In English, the interactants could say:

(5) Let's go to lunch?

(6) Yes, let's.

Though there are many similar possible dialogues in English between a professor and a student about going to lunch together, and the choice among them is determined by contextual features (for example by the relationship between them), none of the English possibilities contain explicit references to this context. In Japanese, too, there are a variety of possible ways to say this, depending on the contextual features. The high context nature of Japanese discourse, this view in the forest, requires that a number of features from the context be not only noted, but explicitly expressed by some obligatory or optional linguistic features. To make the utterance appropriate in a high context culture, the choice of linguistic features among various options is simply the necessary agreement with the context. Since the contextual information is internalized by the speaker and hearer, the agreement of the choice of linguistic features with the contextual elements is necessary for an utterance to be well-formed in terms of pragmatics.

In the case of Japanese, the two utterances above vary de-

pending on the sex, age, and status of the professor and the student and also on their relationship, the degree of closeness.

(7) A professor: Hirumeshi kui ni ikoo ka.
 lunch-VUL eat-VUL DAT shall (we) go Q
 'Shall we go for lunch?'

(8) A student: Ee iki mashoo.
 Yes (shall we) go ADD HON
 'Yes, let's.'

(9) # A student: Un ikoo.
 Yes-VUL shall (we) go

There is agreement on the pragmatic level as to which linguistic forms people of different status can use in this dialogue. (7) is pragmatically acceptable when the speaker is a male professor. Since vulgar forms for lunch and eat are used, it is not acceptable when the speaker is a female professor (at least in speech community with which this author is familiar). (8) would be generally appropriate as the response by any student, as the addressee honorifies 'mashoo' is used. (9) with the vulgar form 'un' and the verb without addressee honorifics can be used by a male toward a person with the same or lower status, but not, for example, by a student to a professor. When one of the varieties is chosen, it indexes not only the social categories (such as gender and role) of the speaker, but also the interactional relationship between the speaker and the hearer by indexing the context of speaking according to the socially expected norms. Thus, honorifics and vulgar forms function to acknowledge both the speaker's attributes and the relationship of the speaker to the hearer. The speaker expresses indexical meaning together with the referential meaning according to the presupposed norm of language use in the society. This acknowledgment device is a useful means to help people form a bond in spite of differences in their ages, status, and roles.

A person can convey certain information by uttering the sentence marked by #. The sentence marked # conveys propositional meaning, since it is a grammatically correct sentence. However, the person who dares to use it conveys something more than expected appropriate meaning. The speaker of necessity conveys ad-

ditional marked meanings by the function of language reflexivity. Since people in a speech community share the indexical meaning of individual linguistic forms, the speaker who dares to use the # marked form expresses creative meaning over the presupposed indexical meaning. For example, if a female professor were to use (7), the reflexive meaning of the form creates the image of her as being tough like a man. If a student were to use (9), the reflexive meaning of the form conveys that the student is being impolite to the professor by using vulgar forms. These reflexive meanings are created in the context, because the linguistic forms appropriate in a particular context are predetermined and negotiated by the members of the community.

Through examples such as these, it becomes apparent how complex linguistic forms are arranged in terms of such variables as the gender of the participants, the levels of formality, and the psychological distance between the speaker and the hearer. It is by means of the choices from among these linguistic forms that non-referential meanings are transmitted. These serve as meta-communicative meaning to show who the speaker is and the speaker's attitude toward this speech event. The choice is always made according to the appropriate position, role, or relationship into which one is placed in the context.

5. Concluding remarks

In the Japanese speech community, the basic premise is that people are different. It is also presupposed that a self is created in relation to others; that the self is determined by each context, and therefore changes from one setting to another.

Thus, the professor is a professor to his students, but the son of his mother, and he will therefore choose other forms in the context of communicating with his mother than he would with his students. One creates and maintains a social self by properly bonding with others.

It is the acknowledgment of the differences in social attributes and in interactional relationships which is indexed by the use or non-use of such modal linguistic forms or morphemes as honorifics, sentence final particle, formal or vulgar linguistic forms and personal pronouns. This acknowledgment is the basis for the bonding of the interactants and all those who are involved in the context of

speaking. Indexing is the essential and obligatory constraint for the speaker of a high context culture.

Notes

* This is the revised version of the paper read at the 7th International Pragmatics Conference in July, 2000. This research was supported in part by grants from the Japanese Association for the Promotion of Science for the years 1998-2000 (Grant No. 10610522), for the years 2001-2002 (Grant No. 13610667), and The Advanced Telecommunications Research Institute International for the years 1996-1998.

† In this paper, 'the subject' is defined semantically. When the predicate refers to the action or state of the preceding noun phrase, it is 'the subject,' regardless whether it is marked by 'wa' or 'ga.' Thus, the functional distinction between 'the subject' and 'the topic' is not considered relevant for the discussion in this paper.

‡ *Korekara no Keigo* (The Guideline for Honorific Use in the New Society) (1952) was issued by the Ministry of Education.

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