

On Approach to the Study of Second-Person Referential terms¹

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1 Introduction

This research demonstrates meta-pragmatic perspective on personal referential terms of second-person referential terms in Japanese naturally occurring utterances. My previous study (1998) includes both the research on first-person referential terms and second-person referential terms. However, we have to treat each of them differently because it can be said that the second-person referential terms are interpersonal matter but first-person referential term is the matter of identity and ideology. So this paper focuses on only second-person referential terms. A person-referential term is a nominal² which refers a certain person in an utterance and in one sentence. Not only subjective elements, but also address forms, genitives and objective elements can be included. The Japanese language is rich in that it has many personal-referential terms. The subject and object are not required elements to make a grammatically correct utterance or a sentence. So in Japanese, speakers tend to omit the performer of an action (personal-referential terms) in an utterance mostly when we are able to judge who and what are the performer(s) of the action from the context.

2 Background

Personal referential terms have been discussed in terms of subject, pronouns and address terms, mainly from the choice of forms and their attribution (Gilman and Brown, 1958, Brown and Gilman, 1960, Brown and Ford, 1961, Susan Ervin-Tripp, 1972, Ide, 1979).

A zero-output is also an acceptable and selecting parameter in Japanese. The concept of subject deletion/ellipsis comes from a framework based on Western languages where the subject is the determiner of the verb inflection. In Japanese, from the perspective of meta-communicative modality, it is generally assumed that subject and object are unmarked in the context of speaking and therefore need not be uttered (Ide, 1998). Because social conventions are at work, the deletion of personal references cannot be explained within an utterance. We cannot clarify the use of such various form from a grammatical explanation. Moreover, we cannot explicate the usage even from the speech level. We have to carefully look at the situation and the information the participants share.

Morino (1971) discusses the absence of subject in Japanese clause can be traced back to a distant history of the language.

...As early as 9th to 12th century, in the Heian Period, speakers avoided referring to a person by his/her real name, when describing their action. To refer directly by name to a person could be interpreted as expressing a derogatory attitude to them. This practice

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Received Sept. 16, 1998

could conceivably be related to similar conventions in other Asian countries which too avoid calling and referring to people by their real names. For example, Errington (1988 : 192-193), reporting on honorific speech in Javanese, points out that when the Javanese want to speak deferentially they avoid “overtly direct reference” thus marking that person “as object of felt deference (cited in Hori, 1995).”

Hori (1995) points out that if referring to persons by their name was problematic, pronouns were no solution to the problem either: pronouns could not be used freely as subject in ancient Japanese. Hori also insists that this was because every pronoun conveyed some specific interpersonal attitude. Let us see some other statements that Hori introduces in her paper.

Kiyose (1989) raises strong doubts about the subject as an indispensable entity in a clause; he points out that *ga* marks the subject in written texts only, being usually omitted in spoken context. He identifies this zero morph as the original nominative case in the history of Japanese, and taking the theme-rheme structure as basic to Japanese.

Kuno (1973) devotes one section to ellipsis, where he mainly discusses pronoun deletion in isolated clauses, concluding with a plea for “further studies” because “It is not clear at present when subjects, objects, and other elements of sentences can be deleted and when they must not be deleted.”

Although most of the classical studies on personal referential terms have clarified their usage to some extent, they are still unknown and complicated. As we have seen, the usage of personal referential terms contains problematic theme for which the solution has not been successfully solved from perspective of theoretical grammar and other related discipline such as functional grammar. This paper tries to illustrate the fact that how second person referential terms are used and tries to suggest what we need to observe to elucidate the analysis.

3 Data Analysis and Discussion

3.1 The data

The data was video taped from a live TV talk show called “*Sutajio paaku kara Konnichiwa* (Hello from the Studio Park)” which was broadcast from 1 : 05 to 2 : 00 PM every weekday afternoon³. One male professional interviewer and one female assistant interviewer interview one guest each day. The guests are usually singers, actors, and others who work mainly in the entertainment field. I focus on the second person referential terms that refers to each guest⁴.

3.2 Zero-output for second-person referent

Let us look at how often personal referential terms for second person referent are used. They are categorized into three groups: (1) uttered personal referential terms which work as a subject element (PRT on), (2) personal referential terms which function as address terms, (3) other functions of personal referential terms which work as genitives and objects, and they require one more group, (4) deleted subject elements. As for the deletion of the person referential term, it would be difficult to judge when and what is deleted. In this research, I would like to focus attention on the deletion of the subject element. Taking account of accessibility, zero-outputs which correspond to a predicate are aimed and analyzed. It is sometimes difficult to pick out where and what

is deleted with zero-output as objective elements or genitives. Elements which are correspondent to genitives are not always required. Deleting objects is acceptable, too. For that reason, it is impracticable to compare the use of person-referential terms and zero-outputs for objectives and genitives. Moreover, some utterances consist of fragments as in (1)

(1) I(interviewer) : *pasokon wa soutou*
 personal computer SUB much
YOU use computer very much.

G(uest) : *iya zenzen yarimasen*
 no never do not do
I do not use computer at all

(Data 2)

In (1), the interviewer does not say both the agent and the verb. However, what is deleted is assumed.

The results are shown in Table 1 :

Table 1 The number of second person reference:
 The number shows how many times the interviewer refers to each guest.

	Data 1	Data 2	Data 3	Data 4	Total
(1) PRT on	10	5	0	5	20
(2) Address	1	2	1	0	4
(3) Others	8	5	2	9	24
(4) PRT off	34	23	41	43	141

The number shows how many times the interviewer uses personal referential terms to refer to each guest. As this data shows, it seems reasonable to suppose that there is a tendency for personal referential terms to rarely be used in the dialogue for second person referential terms.

It is easy to anticipate who and what are the performers when the participants' role is distinct. By *sonkeigo* 'respect language', the speaker's respectful or deferential attitude toward the referent is expressed. As for the power relationships, it is assumed that the guest is in the higher position compared to the interviewers in the program. So the interviewer uses more honorific to the guest.

Excerpts (2) is also an example of zero-output where we can clearly identify who are the performers from honorific point of view.

(2) 1 I: *buyo no bideo o o dashini natta-toiu*
 dance performance LK video O honorific produce QT
I heard that YOU produced YOUR performing video

2 G: *soudesu ne yappari maa korekara torinaosu*
 so COP FP after all well from now on re-having video taken
 That's right. After all, I will have (MY) performance

- 3 *koto mo arudeshoushi...*
 NR too have will FP
 video taken again sometime in the future.

(Data 1)

In excerpt (2), the interviewer uses honorific, '*o dashi ni naru* (produced+honorific).' This honorific is a respectful form where the speaker puts the hearer in a higher position. So the action verb '*dasu* (make)' belongs to the guest. On the contrary, in line 2, the verb '*torinaosu* (have it taken again)' does not have any honorific. So the action belongs to the guest himself. Without knowing the context and situation, it is very hard to identify who is the performer or the agent of the action in each utterance. The example (3) shows that a shared background knowledge prescribes the performer in the utterance. If you are not familiar with the topic, it is very puzzling who and what are the performers in the action. It might be possible that someone might not be able to follow and catch the talk clearly.

- (3) I: *shikashi ano taidan saretekara kyuu kagetsu desu ka*
 however well HON-retire for nine months COP Q
 However, has 9 months passed since you retired the theater group

(Data 4)

3.4 Uttered second-person referential terms

On the grounds that zero-output is unmarked, it seems reasonable to think that the use of personal references is marked. It is natural that the personal referential term is used when clarification is necessary, in order to prevent a possible misunderstanding for the talk. Turning now to the uttered personal referential terms, total numbers are quite few (See Table 1 again). Let us begin by considering the second-person referential terms.

Address terms can be thought of as directly expressing fundamental categorization of the dyadic partner (the guest). Table 2 shows how the interviewer addresses each guest.

Table 2 Address terms from the Interviewer to the guest

Data 1	Data 2	Data 3	Data 4
(Tamasaburo-san)	Moriyama-san (Uchino-kun)	12 Morita-san	_____

As you see, even address terms tend to be avoided, since only four examples were obtained in the 180-minute program. Notice that the interviewer never address the actress in Data 4. This avoidance of address is not limited to this particular interviewer.

The terms in parentheses in Table 2 are said when the interviewer pretends to act as the other person.

- (4) I: *zehi tamasaburo-san yattekudasai*
 QT by all means Mr. Tamasaburo do please
 By all means, please perform with us, Tamasaburo

(Data 1)

A Japanese traditional *Kabuki* actor, Tamasaburo, performed in a drama outside of Japan. The interviewer pretended to be the director who directed 'Nastatia' written by Dostoevsky, saying an utterance which the director could have said to him with a strong foreign accent. In this way, the interviewer is able to clarify that the words are not his own. He gets around his responsibility to choose one form of personal referential term which might determine the relationship between the speaker and the hearer. In Data 1, he says "Tamasaburo-*san*" which consists of First name+*san* (Title). But with the utterance, he pretends to become the drama director they are talking about. In Data 2, with Uchino-*kun*, Last name+*kun*, the interviewer again pretends to be one of the guest's friend. He calls the guest Moriyama-*san*, once. It is the character's name that the guest has played in a popular TV drama. It is not the guest's own name. But many viewers feel more familiar with the character's name. Thus, participants seem to preclude to categorize each other.

The only essential address term in the transcription is "Morita-*san*" in Data 3. Morita is a 17 years old male actor and singer. From the stand point of the age-difference, that the interviewer in his 40's refers to the 17 year old boy by Title+Last name sounds hyper polite. By Title+Last name, the interviewer shows his formal attitude to the young man and may categorize the guest as one professional singer and actor.

Second-person referential terms often shift in the course of the conversation.

Table 3 The varieties the interviewer referring to the guest

	Data 1	Data 2	Data 3	Data 4
Name	Tamasaburo- <i>san</i>	Uchino- <i>san</i>	Morita- <i>san</i>	Ichiro- <i>san</i>
categorical	(<i>anata</i>)	Moriyama- <i>san</i> Kono hito Eigo-geki no kata	—	Ichiro Maki <i>san</i> no youna o-himesama no kakkou-o shita kata
other person's point of view		—		<i>musume watashi</i>
Own Self	<i>gojibun</i> <i>jibun</i>	<i>jibun</i>	—	<i>jibun</i>

As a standard referential form, the interviewer uses Last name+*san*. That is the expression in which only formality is involved. But as for the Data 1, it is a general habit to refer to a Kabuki actor by first name since their first names are passed on to them by their predecessors and thus their first names show their rank, reputation and ability. That being the case, the interviewer acts formally toward the guest.

A consideration of unmarked zero-output produces the following hypothesis: using personal references categorizes the person in a position. The personal referential terms with modifiers categorize the guest in a group and make a more concrete image.

- (5) I: *Eigo geki no kata ga*
English drama of person SUB
the English drama member is

(Data 2)

- (6) I: *Doryoku no hito*
 trying harder person
 trying harder type person

(Data 4)

As for the *anata* (you equivalent form), there is only one example in the present data. As Kikuchi (1996) mentioned above, it is thought to be hard to clearly mention *anata* ‘you’ in Japanese. The one finding in the present data is the speaker pretends to talk like a non-Japanese, talking with strong foreign accent comically.

- (7) I: *Tamasaburo-san, anata shika imasen.*
 Tamasaburo-san you only there is no
 Tamasaburo, you are the only actor (who can play this role).

(Data 1)

By saying *anata*, the speaker make sure it sounds like foreigner talk. The term “*anata*” already has features that are categorized in formal and distant connotations. It is not a personal pronoun but might be included in categorical terms. Japanese do not have the habit of asking other people to call them by certain name, as in “Call me, John” or “On pourrait se tutoyer?” The speaker judges what to call people according to social conventions. Speakers can also change their speech level or politeness level with the honorific system in utterances, too. But personal referential terms can strongly frame their relationships compared to the other honorific system. So people hesitate to use second-person referential terms in order to prevent the misjudgment and offensiveness.

The personal referential terms sometimes shift to “*jibun*,” or “*go-jibun*” and “*go-jishin*.” These words literally means “own self.” *Jibun* is often used both as a first-person referential or a second-person referential. Sometimes it refers to a third person. However, the functions differs with each other.

- (8) I: *Go-jibun de o-kane o zenbu tsukutte*
 HON-own self by HON-money O all made
 You made your money yourself

(Data 1)

- (9) I: *Demo ukaruto omoimashita jibunde*
 but passed think PAST (Q) own self
 Did you think you would pass the test?

(Data 4)

When the interviewer refers to the guest “*jibun*,” he might be trying to empathize or see out from the guest’s eyes’ view. It is presumed that the interviewer shows that he is sharing his feeling of the guest. Moreover, using *jibun* is to clarify the agent in the utterance, “not anyone but you.”

In (9), the interviewer adds “*jibun de*” in the last part of the utterance. This means that he would like to emphasize how she herself thinks about passing the test. This technique is adapted when the interviewer use “*watashi*.” The speaker completely has a sense of identification with the dyadic partner, as in (10).

- (10) I: *sonnani yasun dara watashi wa torinokosareteiru*
 Such rest if I SB left behind COP
 If YOU take rest such a long time, you will be left behind.
 (Data 4)

4 Conclusion

It can be said that “zero-output” is optional and might be preferable because participants are able to confirm that they are sharing same background knowledge. To people who do not share any background knowledge, it is very puzzling who and what are the performers in the action. As a consequence, ongoing interaction without clarifying an agent strengthens participants’ shared feeling of background, amplify their intimacy and in-group awareness.

Japanese does not always require an agent (performer) from a grammatical aspect. From the data analysis, most of the zero-output can be identified from the honorific system. Moreover, sometimes their point of view merges with the word *jibun* (own self) and sometimes they stand on the same view.

Since the zero-output is customary, using person-referential terms supposed to be marked. Second, using person-referential terms categorizes a participant, or the speaker himself/herself. Consequently, which expression a speaker uses as a person-reference term predetermines a distinct personality of the individual. People also encode social relations of power and solidarity into this categorization. Thus, to prevent the misjudgment and offensiveness, a speaker hesitate to categorize the other people in a face-to-face conversation. First, personal references are used when a speaker tries to make identification clearer in order to prevent probable misunderstanding.

This usage can be explained from the culture specific interpersonal relations. I suggest the followings in order to clarify the usage of personal referential terms.

1. The analysis of personal referential terms from the perspective of grammar to see whether they are constituents as subjects or theme.
2. The analysis of interpersonal structure to see what is the effects of usage of personal referential terms. The grade of interpersonal relations are categorized as follows: they are assimilated, they are in the same-in group, they are on the border of in-group and out group (neutral), they are not in the same group, they have hostility.
3. The analysis is required from the perspective of information theory, such as new information and old information.

Acknowledgment:

I would like to thank Waconda Clayworth, and Alastair Graham-marr among others for giving me a number of valuable comments and suggestions.

Notes:

- 1 This paper was originally presented at the 6th International Pragmatics Association Conference, Reims Champagne Congress, Reims, France on August 24, 1998. I am thankful for the valuable comments on site.
- 2 *Anata* (you) is sometimes regarded as a pronoun. But it is included in this category because it has some connotation.
- 3 The data
Sutajio Paaku kara Konnichiwa NHK General (Hello from the Studio Park)

The main Interviewer · Masaaki Horio

The Assistant Interviewer : Chika Takami (Her utterances are not included in this analysis)

- 4 The guests Data 1 : Tamasaburo Bando (*Kabuki* performer) February 27, 1997.
 Data 2 : Masaaki Uchino (actor) March 30 th, 1997.
 Data 3 : Go Morita (singer) January 6 th, 1997
 Data 4 : Maki Ichiro (actress) March 3 rd, 1997

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Appendix A: Key to Abbreviations and orthographic conventions

Aux	auxiliary verb	COP	various forms of copula verb be
FP	final particle	HON-	honorific suffix
LOC	location marker	NR	nominalizer
NEG	negative morpheme	O	object marker
PAST	past tense particle	Q	question marker
SB	subject marker (performer)	QT	quotative marker
TP	topic marker		

Underlined capital letters Probable personal referential terms which are deleted in the utterance.