

WHAT TYPE OF PRONOUNS DO JAPANESE AND KOREAN HAVE?

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1. Introduction

Many linguists have proposed that above the CP level of syntactic structure there is an abstract layer (sometimes referred to as the *interactional layer*) that encodes information related to discourse (see Speas and Tenny 2003, Heim et al. 2016, Hill 2013). Ritter and Wiltschko (2018) have hypothesized that this same interactional layer exists for nominals above the DP level and it encodes the attitudes of the speaker and addressee towards the referent of the nominal. Using the interactional layer of nominal structure, Ritter and Wiltschko (2019) define two types of formal pronouns. For the remainder of this paper the term ‘formal’ is used to denote a type of pronoun that signifies social proximity (informal) or distance (formal) and expresses the type of relationship between the speaker and either the addressee or the referent of the nominal.

Type I pronouns are bundles of binary phi-features (e.g. [$\pm 1^{\text{st}}$ person], [\pm plural], [\pm feminine]...etc.) (Ritter and Wiltschko 2019). These are merged in the DP layer of structure and form typical pronominal paradigms which are contrastive for phi-features. Type I pronouns generally express a binary formality distinction; either a pronoun is considered formal or it is not. These pronouns are commonly found in Indo-European languages such as French and German.

Type II pronouns encode much more than phi-features (e.g. the speaker and addressee’s relative social status, age, gender...etc.) (Ritter and Wiltschko 2019).¹ These are merged in the interactional layer of structure and do not form paradigms which are contrastive for phi-features. Type II pronouns generally express multiple levels of formality; any number of pronouns can be used to address or refer to someone depending on several contextual factors. These pronouns are quite uncommon in the world’s languages, and only Japanese and Korean are identified as languages having Type II pronouns by Ritter and Wiltschko (2019).

The World Atlas of Language Structures (WALS) Chapter 45 “Politeness distinctions in pronouns” distinguishes four types of languages based on politeness (formality) distinctions in pronouns; (a) languages with no formality distinction, ; (b) languages with a binary formality distinction, ; (c) languages with multiple formality distinctions, ; and (d) languages that avoid the use of pronouns for reasons of politeness

¹ Ritter and Wiltschko (2019) introduce the term *paranoun* for what I refer to as Type II pronouns and only use the term *pronoun* for Type I pronouns.

(Helmbrecht 2013). Japanese and Korean fall under type (d), along with five other languages.

This paper studies the seven languages listed under (d) (avoid the use of pronouns for reasons of politeness) to answer the following research question: Do all of the languages listed in WALS Chapter 45 as avoiding the use of pronouns for reasons of politeness have what Ritter and Wiltschko (2019) analyze as Type II pronouns?

In order to determine this, I consult grammars and other secondary sources to establish whether the properties that define Japanese and Korean as Type II pronoun languages also apply to the five other languages under study. I determine that all seven languages largely adhere to the determining properties, with some exceptions.

This paper is structured as follows: Section 2 will delve deeper into the background literature on the interactional layer of syntactic structure and Type I vs. Type II pronouns. Section 3 will introduce a set of diagnostic criteria and demonstrate their application in Japanese and Korean. Section 4 will discuss the findings of this study. Concluding remarks will be presented in Section 5.

2. Background

Several linguists have posited the existence of an “interactional” layer of syntactic structure (see Tenny and Speas 2003, Heim et al. 2016, Hill and 2013). This is an abstract layer of grammatical structure located above the CP that encodes a wealth of pragmatic, discourse, and contextual information. Within this interactional layer of clausal structure, there is a Resp(onse)P that encodes whether or not a response is expected from the addressee, as well as two GroundPs (one for the speaker, one for the addressee) which encode the speaker’s beliefs about the speech act participants’ attitudes toward the propositional content, as well as the speaker’s beliefs about what the addressee knows (Wiltschko 2020 to appear). Hence, the interpretive function of GroundP is to manage the common ground in the sense of Stalnaker (1978, 2002).

Ritter and Wiltschko (2018) posit a parallel interactional layer of nominal structure which encodes the attitudes of the speech act participants about the referent of the nominal. This nominal interactional layer plays a role in deciding whether to refer to someone by their name, a title, a familial relation, a common noun, or a pronoun. Ritter and Wiltschko (2019) use the nominal interactional layer to explain the difference between Type I and II pronouns.

As proposed by Ritter and Wiltschko (2019), Type I formal pronouns are merged in the DP layer of structure, then undergo movement and remerge in the interactional layer. Type I formal pronouns are found in many Indo-European languages, such as French and German. In these languages the formal pronouns are comprised of phi-features and normally have a binary formality distinction. These formal pronouns are homophonous with another pronoun in the paradigm. For example, the French 2nd person plural pronoun *vous* can also be used with a 2nd person singular referent in order to signify a formal relationship. *Vous*-type pronouns have the same phi-features and trigger the same agreement regardless of their referent, leading to possible person or number mismatches between the referent and the pronoun being used.

Type II pronouns, which are merged in the interactional layer, are exemplified by Japanese and Korean. Ritter and Wiltschko (2019) assert that the pronouns in these languages are not comprised of phi-features, but rather encode discourse information such as the relative social status of the speech act participants, their age, and sometimes conceptual gender, resulting in multiple levels of formality.² Unlike their French and German counterparts, in these languages formal pronouns do not have a homophonous form. Example (1a) represents the structure for Type I formal pronouns and (1b) represents the structure for Type II formal pronouns.

(1) a. [_{GroundP} **Type-I**_i ... [_{DP} **t**_i]...]

b. [_{GroundP} **Type-II**_j ... [_{DP} \emptyset]...]

Japanese and Korean are two languages that are well-known for their use of complex formality systems in their grammars. These convey whether there is closeness or familiarity between the speaker and addressee or other individual, based on their relative social status, age, gender, etc. In particular, personal pronouns in these languages vary greatly from those in French and German and other languages with Type I formal pronouns in a number of ways.

Ritter and Wiltschko (2018) propose that the difference between Type I and Type II pronouns can be explained by the *Duality of Person Hypothesis*. This hypothesis distinguishes grammatical and pragmatic person to account for the variability seen between personal pronoun paradigms. The use of grammatical person for Type I pronouns (recall that these are said to be bundles of phi-features) and the use of pragmatic person for Type II pronouns (not bundles of phi-features) are illustrated in Table 1. Grammatical person features are [± 1] and [± 2] which can account for a four-way person distinction; 1st inclusive, 1st exclusive, 2nd, and 3rd person (Ritter and Wiltschko 2018: 5). Grammatical gender is comprised of binary gender features and is defined in terms of agreement and concord, whereas pragmatic gender lacks these binary features and can exist in languages with no agreement (Ritter and Wiltschko 2018: 6). Ritter and Wiltschko (2018) suggest that a [+plural] feature is interpreted as an additive plural, denoting a set of entities (e.g. books = book + book + book). This contrasts with [-plural], which denotes a singleton. An associative plural denotes a group consisting of one focal individual and their associates and is restricted to humans (Moravscik 2003: 471-472). Additive plurals must occur with grammatical person, but associative plural can occur with either grammatical or pragmatic person (Ritter and Wiltschko 2018: 6). It will be important to note later that 1st person plural is always associative as it is not presumed that there is a multitude of speakers at a given time, but rather one speaker and the other individuals in the 1st plural group are associated with them, whether or not this includes

² Conceptual gender is also known as semantic or natural gender.

the addressee (Harley and Ritter 2002: 6). Formality (social deixis) distinctions are assumed to be instances of pragmatic person (Ritter and Wiltschko 2018: 7).

Table 1. Grammatical vs. pragmatic person (Ritter and Wiltschko 2018: 8, Table 5)

	Grammatical person	Pragmatic person
Grammatical number	[±pl] (or associative)	(no) only associative plural
Grammatical gender	[±feminine],...	(no) only semantic gender
3rd person	[-1,-2]	??(tbd)
1st inclusive pronoun	[+1,+2]	(no) speaker or addressee
Formality distinctions	no	yes

A language can have exclusively grammatical pronouns, which are merged in the DP, exclusively pragmatic pronouns, which are merged in the interactional layer, or a combination of the two (Ritter and Wiltschko 2018: 4-5).

The World Atlas of Language Structures (WALS) Chapter 45 “Politeness distinctions in pronouns” identifies four types of languages based on politeness (formality) distinctions in their pronouns: (a) languages with no formality distinction; (b) languages with a binary formality distinction; (c) languages with multiple formality distinctions; and (d) languages that avoid the use of pronouns for reasons of politeness. WALS identifies only seven languages that fall under the final category; they are listed in Table 2 along with their respective language families and the countries in which they are primarily spoken. Note from Figure 1 that they are all spoken in roughly the same geographic region (East/Southeast Asia) but are from diverse language families.

Table 2. Languages that avoid pronouns for politeness (Helmbrecht 2013)

Language	Language Family	Spoken in
Japanese	Japonic	Japan
Korean	Koreanic	Korea
Burmese	Sino-Tibetan	Myanmar
Indonesian	Austronesian	Indonesia, East Timor
Khmer	Austroasiatic	Cambodia
Thai	Kra-Dai	Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar, Vietnam
Vietnamese	Austroasiatic	Vietnam

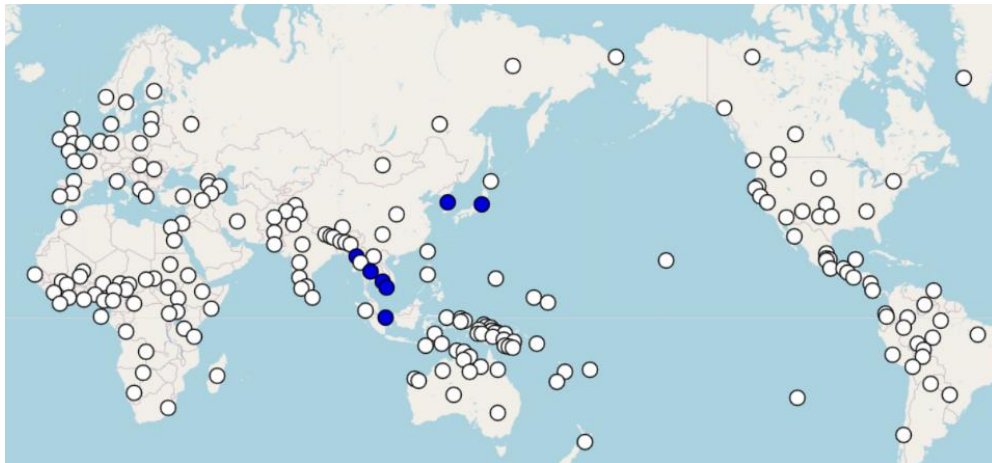


Figure 1. Map of languages that avoid the use of pronouns for reasons of politeness (Helmbrecht 2013).

Speakers of these languages often avoid the use of pronouns altogether in order to avert the social connotations embedded in them. Using an inappropriate pronoun could offend or embarrass the speaker, addressee, or referent and result in the speaker losing face. This practice is highly pragmatic. Kaiser, Ichikawa, Kobayashi and Yamamoto (2001) say, “Japanese pron[ouns] are intimately tied up with hierarchy and levels of respect. For this reason, the use of personal pron[ouns] is generally avoided in formal relationships and situations.” (p. 370). The fact that these languages share this characteristic prompts an interesting question about what properties their pronouns may have in common, motivating the following research question posed on Page 2 and repeated here for convenience: Do all of the languages listed in WALS Chapter 45 as avoiding the use of pronouns for reasons of politeness have what Ritter and Wiltschko (2019) analyze as Type II pronouns? This question is explored in the following sections. Note that WALS lists Indonesian as part of the typology, but since Indonesian is generally considered a standardized variety of Malay, both Malay and Indonesian secondary sources were consulted.

3. Properties of Type II pronouns

Based on the description of Type II pronouns given by Ritter and Wiltschko (2019), certain properties and distributional characteristics are logically expected to follow. Diagnostics based on these properties and distributional characteristics will be developed in this section. Recall that Type II pronouns are inherently pragmatic in nature and merge in the interactional layer of nominal structure.

3.1 Diagnostics based on the absence of phi-features

Assuming that Type II pronouns lack phi-features, certain grammatical consequences are expected, and these can be used as diagnostics for determining whether a language has Type I or II formal pronouns.

3.1.1 Verb agreement

Phi agreement on a verb necessarily entails the presence of phi-features on its controller but the lack of phi agreement on a verb does not necessarily entail the absence of phi-features on its controller. In other words, lack of agreement on the verb is a necessary, but not sufficient condition for diagnosing Type II pronouns. Thus, the lack of agreement is consistent with Type II pronouns. This leads to the first diagnostic: Type II pronouns do not trigger phi agreement on verbs.

Japanese pronouns do not trigger phi agreement on verbs. This is shown in the Japanese example in (2).

(2) Japanese ³

- a. **Watasi-ga** otya-o **non-da.**
 I-NOM tea-ACC drink-PAST
 ‘I drank tea.’
- b. **Kanojo-ga** otya-o **non-da.**
 she-NOM tea-ACC drink-PAST
 ‘She drank tea.’

3.1.2 Number distinction

Second, if a pronoun generally lacks phi-features, then it will specifically lack a number feature, i.e. [\pm plural]. As stated in Ritter and Wiltschko (2018), associative plural is not a phi-feature, and consequently can be found in Type II languages. An associative plural marker is often optional, and it can be added to proper names, common nouns and pronouns. This, then, constitutes a second diagnostic: Type II pronouns are either unspecified for number or are made explicitly plural with an associative plural marker.

Japanese nouns and personal pronouns are marked for plural by adding the associative plural markers *-tachi/-tati*, *-ra*, and *-domo* (Kaiser et al. 2001: 137), as illustrated in (3). Plural meaning in these languages is often derivable from context.

³ I am grateful to Kimiko Nakanishi for providing me with all of the Japanese examples in this paper.

(3) Japanese

- a. Watasi-ga nanika-o katta
 I-NOM something-ACC buy
 ‘I bought something.’
- b. Watasi-**tati**-ga nanika-o katta
 I-**PL**-NOM something-ACC buy
 ‘We bought something.’

3.1.3 Gender distinction

Similarly, if a pronoun generally lacks phi-features, then it will specifically lack a gender feature ([±fem], [±masc], etc.). This is reflected in the fact that adjectives are not inflected for gender agreement with the pronoun (or noun) and constitutes the third diagnostic: Type II pronouns do not trigger gender agreement on adjectives.

The absence of grammatical gender, however, does not exclude the possibility of encoding conceptual gender (Ritter and Wiltschko 2018) in pronouns (or nouns). The lack of gender agreement on adjectives is shown in (4). Note that the 3rd person pronouns *kare* ‘he’ and *kanojo* ‘she’ can also be used to mean ‘boyfriend’ and ‘girlfriend’, respectively (Kaiser et al. 2001: 374).

(4) Japanese

- watasi-no sutekina **kare** / **kanojo**
 my-GEN wonderful he / she
 ‘my wonderful boyfriend / girlfriend’

3.1.4 Open class

If Type II pronouns lack phi-features, it would not be expected that they form regular paradigms contrastive for person, number, or gender. This could mean that a set of pronouns could have fewer or significantly more forms than a typical phi-contrastive paradigm. This constitutes the diagnostic fourth diagnostic: Type II pronouns form an open class.

Where many languages with closed-class pronoun paradigms might have two to four (sometimes more) 1st person forms (e.g. singular, plural, dual, inclusive, exclusive, etc.), a language with an open class set of pronouns like Japanese could have many more. Martin (1988) lists 21 possible 1st person pronominal forms (p. 1076-7). Additionally, it would not be expected that the differences between pronouns could be formulated in terms of contrastive values of binary formal grammatical features, as seen in the Japanese 1st person pronouns. *Watasi* is considered less formal than *watakusi* (though they are both considered “neutral”), but when contrasted with a male-only 1st person pronoun such as *boku*, the implication is that the speaker using *watasi* is female (Kaiser et al. 2001: 372). None of these differences are relevant to phi-features but, rather, to pragmatics.

3.1.5 Pro-drop

There are two main types of pro-drop commonly found across languages; pro-drop that is licensed by rich agreement (e.g. Spanish pro-drop) and discourse-determined pro-drop (e.g. topic dropping). If a language has pro-drop but lacks phi-features in its pronouns, it must be licensed by discourse and information structure rather than through rich agreement. This constitutes the fifth diagnostic: If a language with Type II pronouns has pro-drop, subjects and objects can be dropped if they are discourse topics or easily retrievable from context.

Japanese and Korean are both pro-drop languages where the pro-drop is licensed by discourse rather than rich agreement as seen in (5) for subjects and (6) for objects.

(5) Japanese

Context: I saw Mika yesterday.

- a. **Kanojo**-ga Marika-o paatii-ni yon-da.
she-NOM Marika-ACC party-to invite-PAST
'She invited Marika to (her) party.'
- b. Marika-o paatii-ni yon-da
Marika-ACC party-to invite-PAST
'(pro) invited Marika to (her) party.'

(6) Japanese

Context: I saw Marika yesterday.

- a. Mika-ga **kanojo**-o paatii-ni yon-da
Mika-NOM she-ACC party-to invite-PAST
'Mika invited her to (the) party.'
- b. Mika-ga paatii-ni yon-da
Mika-NOM party-to invite-PAST
'Mika invited (pro) to (the) party.'

3.1.6 Person

While person is arguably one of the most prominent phi-features associated with pronouns, it is not such a strong diagnostic for Type I vs. Type II pronouns. Due to extensive overlap between the distribution and function of grammatical person and pragmatic person (i.e. [+1] and [speaker]) it is very difficult to determine whether a person phi-feature is present in a suspected Type II language, especially given the preestablished lack of agreement. For this reason, person can be used at most as the following supportive diagnostic: A given Type II pronoun may be flexible in denoting multiple possible referents of different "grammatical" or pragmatic persons. For example, if a given Type II pronoun is traditionally considered a 2nd person pronoun but can also

have 1st or 3rd person referents, this supports that the person features are pragmatic rather than grammatical.

3.2 Diagnostics based on the interactional layer

If Type II pronouns are merged in the interactional layer of nominal structure rather than the propositional layer, another set of properties would be predicted to occur.

3.2.1 Humans only

Ritter and Wiltschko (2018) mention in a footnote that humanness may be a diagnostic for pragmatic person. This may be based on the idea that animals and inanimate objects are not normally interlocutors or speech act participants, as discourse is a uniquely human activity. If Type II pronouns express intricate social relationships and denote social status, they would not likely be used to refer to animals or inanimate objects. This paper will test the sixth diagnostic: Type II pronouns refer only to humans.

Japanese pronouns can only refer to humans, not animals, inanimate objects, or ideas (Akiyama and Akiyama 1991: 29).

3.2.2 Kinship terms and titles of address

Kinship terms and titles of address are other ways to refer to the addressee which Ritter and Wiltschko (2018) also claim are merged in the interactional layer of structure, because they are also highly sensitive to discourse context and the relationship between the speaker and the addressee/referent. This gives rise to the seventh diagnostic: Type II pronouns have the same distribution and communicative function as kinship terms and titles of address.

In Japanese, kinship terms and titles have the same distributional properties and convey the same communicative function which is nominal discourse reference that conveys an appropriate degree of respect to the referent.

The next section will apply the properties above to the remaining languages under study and discuss the results.

4. Results

Table 3 displays the results of the study with each language listed alongside each of the diagnostics. Japanese and Korean are used as a baseline for comparison, followed by the remaining five languages. Note that Japanese and Korean pass each diagnostic, as do most of the other languages in the study. Each property will be discussed in more detail below, as well as any unexpected findings.

Table 3. Diagnostics applied to each language under study. Unexpected results are circled in black. Results requiring further explanation are marked with an asterisk (*).

Language	Verb Agreement	Number Distinction	Gramm. Gender	Open-Class	DD Pro-drop	Humans Only	Kinship/Titles
Japanese	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Korean	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Burmese	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Khmer	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Indonesian	N	N*	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Vietnamese	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y
Thai	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y

4.1 No phi-agreement on verbs

The results show very clearly that the pronouns in each of the languages under study do not trigger any sort of phi-agreement on verbs. Each of the languages is isolating and their verbs do not inflect to agree with subjects or objects, regardless of whether they are a pronoun, any other type of nominal, or not overtly present.

4.2 No grammatical number

The pronouns in the languages under study do not have overtly plural forms. The pronouns are either neutral for number, as in Khmer, where a single pronoun can have singular or plural reference with no overt marking, or they are (obligatorily or optionally) made explicitly plural with the use of an associative plural marker, as in Burmese.

The only apparent exception for this diagnostic is found in Standard Formal Indonesian. This standardized variety of Malay does appear to maintain a historical number distinction from Proto-Austronesian in its pronouns (see Sneddon 1996) but most varieties of Malay (including nonstandard varieties of Indonesian) use the associative plural suffix *-ong* (derived from *orang* ‘person’) with a singular or number-neutral form to invoke an explicitly plural meaning. This is shown in (7) below.

- (7) Malay/Indonesian (Donohue and Smith 1998: 71)
 a. *kita* (1SG/1PL)⁴ → *kitong* (1PL)

⁴ *Kita* is historically a 1st person plural inclusive pronoun and remains so in Standard Formal Indonesian. In many varieties of nonstandard Indonesian/Malay *kita* is used for 1st person singular or even 2nd person referents (see Donohue and Smith 1998).

- b. *kamu* (2SG) → *kamong* (2PL)
- c. *dia* (3SG) → *diaorang* (3PL)

If the plural forms in Standard Formal Indonesian are associative (pragmatic) plurals, this does not violate the diagnostic *Type II pronouns are either unspecified for number or are made explicitly plural with an associative plural marker*. If these forms are additive (grammatical) plurals, this implies the presence of a plural phi-feature and violates diagnostic (4). This could mean a number of things. One possibility is that Standard Formal Indonesian is not a Type II pronoun language, even though other varieties of Malay pass this diagnostic. This would suggest a massive grammatical shift undergone by other varieties of Malay but not Standard Indonesian. Another possibility is that there is a problem with this particular diagnostic. Lastly, it could mean that Ritter and Wiltschko (2019) were incorrect or overspecified in their description of Type II pronouns. I leave it for future research to determine what type of plural is exhibited in Standard Formal Indonesian's pronouns.

4.3 No grammatical gender

The results show that none of the languages under study have a grammatical gender distinction in their pronouns, nor do they have grammatical gender for other nominals. That is, neither pronouns nor other nominals in this language appear to trigger any gender agreement on verbs, predicative or modifying adjectives, or articles, satisfying the third diagnostic. This is consistent with the hypothesis that Type II pronouns lack phi-features. Conceptual gender certainly exists in these languages, but it does not appear to have consequences in the grammar relevant to agreement or concord.

4.4 Open class

Each language's personal pronouns form an open class, allowing for potential innovations. For example, Standard Indonesian added the 2nd person singular form *anda* in the 1950s with the intention of it being used as a socially neutral form (Sneddon 1996: 161). In some languages such as Khmer and Thai, many of the pronouns are common nouns that speakers began using as pronouns, such as /kramóm/ 'I' lit. 'crown of the head' and /fâa bâad/ 'you' lit. 'sole of the foot' (Cooke 1965: 22, 27).

4.5 Discourse-determined pro-drop

The results for this section are particularly interesting. Each language under investigation has pro-drop for both subjects and objects when the referents are easily retrievable from context. This finding is interesting because the presence of pro-drop is not a necessary condition for a Type II pronoun language, yet every suspected Type II pronoun language has it. The pro-drop in these languages is clearly discourse-determined and is certainly

not licensed by rich agreement. This strongly reinforces the idea that these languages' use of pronouns is heavily pragmatic.

4.6 Person

As mentioned in Section 3, person can only be used as a supportive diagnostic and cannot draw any conclusions on its own. The results show that at least Burmese, Khmer, Thai, and Malay have less rigid person restrictions for pronouns, where pronouns that are traditionally attributed to a certain person can be used to refer to an entity of another person. For example, the traditionally 3rd person Burmese pronoun *əu-myà* 'other people' can be used to refer to the speaker when expressing discontent (Jenny and Tun 2016: 62).

4.7 Humans only

This section is where we see the most exceptions.^{5 6} Vietnamese and Thai have 3rd person pronouns which can sometimes refer to animals or inanimate objects. The Vietnamese 3rd person pronoun *nó* can refer to children, animals, and inanimate objects, but only in the singular form as the associative plural marker *chúng* can only be used for groups of humans (Thompson 1965: 250). The Thai 3rd person pronoun *man* is roughly equivalent to *it* in English and can be used to refer to animals, objects, or impolitely to people (Smyth 2000: 39).

As mentioned in Section 2, Ritter and Wiltschko (2019) propose that while there are languages with only Type I or only Type II pronouns, there can also be mixed systems with both (p. 4-5). This is a logical explanation for the exceptional data found in Thai and Vietnamese. It is possible that these languages have mixed systems where the majority of their pronouns are Type II and refer exclusively to humans, but the ones that can refer to non-human entities are Type I. This would mean that *nó* (Vietnamese) and *man* (Thai) would merge in the DP layer of structure and remerge in the interactional layer. This would also mean that the two exceptional pronouns are likely comprised of phi-features and could reasonably have person, number, or gender features, though this is not evident from the grammar. This theory is merely speculative and requires further investigation.

The rest of the languages in this study have pronouns which can only be used for human referents.⁷

⁵ Khmer can use personal pronouns to refer to animals, but only when used resumptively. The reference grammars consulted for this study do not provide enough information on this phenomenon to perform a sufficient analysis, and for this reason I will leave this possible exception for future research.

⁶ In Standard Indonesian, personal pronouns can generally only refer to humans though there is said to be a certain journalistic style which allows the 3rd person plural pronoun *mereka* to refer to non-human entities, though this style is rejected by many speakers (Sneddon 1996: 168). As this does not appear to be a significant part of Standard Indonesian speakers' grammars, it is not considered a significant exception in this study.

⁷ The Burmese 3rd person pronoun *əu* (lit. 'person') refers almost exclusively to humans, but can sometimes refer to non-humans, mostly in certain frozen expressions (Jenny and Tun 2016: 63).

4.8 Kinship terms and titles of address

Personal pronouns in each of the languages under study have the same distribution and communicative function as kinship terms and titles of address. In fact, each grammar consulted for this study groups these word classes together and expresses a high degree of similarity between them in terms of their use. In all cases, the grammars of these languages state a preference for the use of kinship terms or titles as substitutes for pronouns, which is unsurprising given they are classed under the title of “pronouns avoided for reasons of politeness” in WALs Chapter 45 (Helmbrecht 2013). For example, Jenny and Tun (2016) say, “The original set of pronouns has been expanded in Burmese by a rather big, probably open, class of kinship, professional, and social terms that are used in place of pronouns. The same term can stand for first, second, or third person, depending on the context.” (p. 52). Equivalent quotes are found in the grammars of each language consulted for this study.

5. Conclusion

Using the diagnostics developed in Section 3 based on Ritter and Wiltschko’s (2019) description of Type II pronouns, I attempt to determine whether all seven languages listed in Chapter 45 of WALs as having pronouns that are avoided for reasons of politeness have Type II pronouns. I conclude that all seven languages generally follow the Type II pattern, though some results were unexpected.

The following diagnostics yield the expected results consistent with the proposed Type II pronoun typology: Type II pronouns do not trigger phi-agreement on verbs; Type II pronouns do not trigger gender agreement on adjectives; Type II pronouns form an open class; If a language with Type II pronouns has pro-drop, subjects and objects can be dropped if they are discourse topics or easily retrievable from context; and Type II pronouns have the same distribution and communicative function as kinship terms and titles of address. Each of these properties applying perfectly to these languages serves as support for Ritter and Wiltschko’s (2019) proposal of two formal pronoun typologies, and strongly suggests that the languages under study could fall under the Type II pronoun category. Additionally, at least Khmer, Burmese, Thai, and Malay have flexible person reference in their pronouns where certain pronouns that are traditionally considered to have a specific person feature can be used to refer to other persons, satisfying the supportive diagnostic: A given Type II pronoun may be flexible in denoting multiple possible referents of different “grammatical” or pragmatic persons.

The diagnostic *Type II pronouns are either unspecified for number or are made explicitly plural with an associative plural marker* is where we see the first minor instance of variation. Most varieties of Malay do not have an overt number contrast in their pronouns and employ the use of an associative plural marker *-ong* (derived from *orang* ‘person’) on singular or number-neutral pronouns to invoke a plural interpretation (Donohue and Smith 1998). Standard Formal Indonesian, however, appears to maintain a number contrast in their personal pronouns (Sneddon 1996). If the Standard Formal

Indonesian plural forms are associative (pragmatic) plurals, this poses no problem for Ritter and Wiltschko's (2019) description of Type II pronouns as it does not entail the presence of a plural phi-feature. If the plural forms are additive (grammatical) plurals, it would be evident that a plural phi-feature is present and would either disqualify Standard Formal Indonesian as a Type II language or require a revision of the diagnostic criteria.

The diagnostic *Type II pronouns only refer to humans* also has some exceptions in Thai and Vietnamese. These languages have 3rd person pronouns which can sometimes refer to animals and inanimate objects. This suggests that Thai and Vietnamese could have mixed systems where most of their pronouns are Type II, but some are Type I.

Though the results of this study are not entirely conclusive, it is plain to see that, despite their diverse genetic backgrounds, all seven languages listed in WALS Chapter 45 as having pronouns which are avoided for reasons of politeness follow the pattern of Type II pronouns very closely and offer support for the Type I/Type II pronoun distinction made by Ritter and Wiltschko (2019).

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