

What type of pronouns do Japanese and Korean have?

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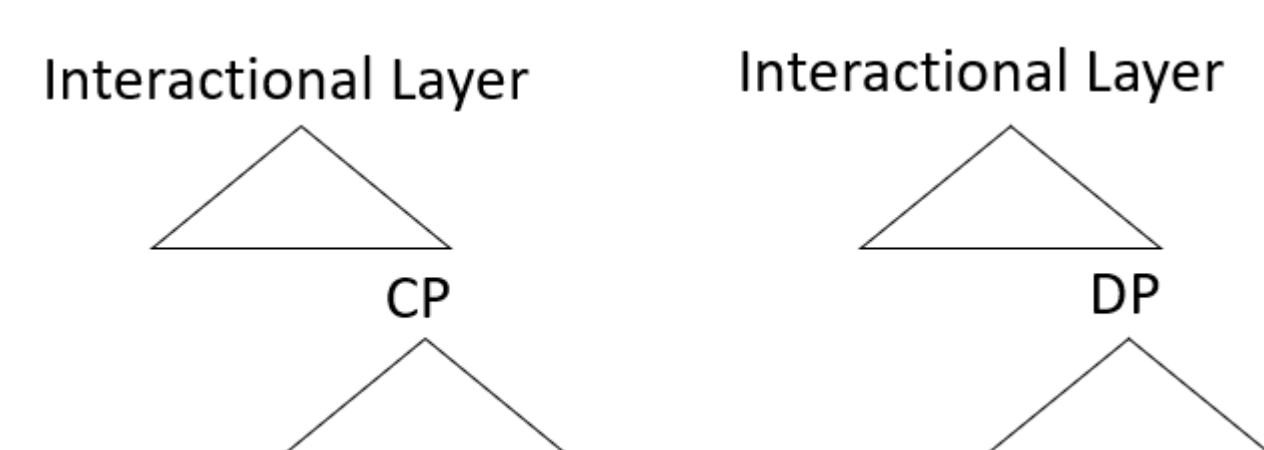
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1. Background

- Ritter & Wiltschko (2018) propose an abstract “interactional” layer of nominal structure which encodes the attitudes and beliefs of the speaker and addressee, parallel to interactional layer of clausal structure.



- Ritter & Wiltschko (2019) define two types of formal pronouns; **Type I** (French, German) and **Type II** (Japanese, Korean)

Type I Pronouns (French, German)	Type II Pronouns (Japanese, Korean)
Inherent phi-features	Inherent discourse content
Originate in propositional layer	Originate in interactional layer
Binary formality distinction	Multiple levels of formality

Table 1. Comparison of Pronoun Types (Ritter & Wiltschko 2019)

- Japanese and Korean are two of the languages listed in the World Atlas of Language Structures (WALS) Chapter 45 as having pronouns which are avoided for politeness

2. Research Question

- Do all languages listed in WALS Chapter 45 as having pronouns which are avoided for politeness have Type II pronouns?

3. Study

- Case study of all 7 languages listed in WALS as having pronouns which are avoided for politeness:
 - Japanese and Korean (as baseline), as well as **Burmese, Khmer, Vietnamese, Thai, and Indonesian**
- Data from grammars and other secondary sources
- Assuming Type II pronouns lack phi-features, we predict that ...
 - There will be no phi agreement on verbs
 - Pronouns will not be specified for grammatical number
 - Pronouns will not be specified for grammatical gender
 - There will be no closed class of personal pronouns forming a paradigm of forms that contrast in person, number and gender features
 - If the language has pro-drop, it will be licensed by discourse considerations (Information structure)
- Assuming Type II pronouns are merged in the interactional layer, we predict that ...
 - Pronouns can only refer to humans
 - Pronouns constitute an open class that expresses information about discourse context, social status and relationship to speaker, resulting in multiple levels of formality
 - Kinship terms and titles of address (i.e. Ns that express discourse context, social status and relationship to speaker) can be used instead of pronouns

4. Results

- All languages listed in WALS Chapter 45 as having pronouns which are avoided for politeness share (with some exceptions) the following Type II properties:
 - no phi agreement on verbs
 - no grammatical gender
 - pronouns are an open class
 - discourse determined pro-drop
 - multiple levels of formality
 - pronouns used for humans only
 - pronouns form a natural class with kinship terms/titles
- Unexpected finding #1: Pronouns specified for number
 - Indonesian pronouns appear to have a number distinction (singular vs plural)
 - ...ok if an associative (pragmatic) plural, but problematic if an additive (grammatical) plural
- Unexpected finding #2: Pronouns with non-human referents
 - In Thai and Vietnamese, certain 3rd person indefinite pronouns can refer to animals or inanimate object
 - In Khmer, certain 3rd person pronouns can be used as **resumptive pronouns** whose antecedent refers to an animal
 - *In a particular journalistic style in Indonesian it is acceptable to refer to animals with certain 3rd person pronouns, though this is largely rejected by many speakers

5. Conclusion

- There is some evidence that all seven languages listed as having pronouns which are avoided for politeness in WALS have Type II pronouns, though further research is required to better understand and explain some of the unexpected results.

6. Next Steps

- Investigate unexpected results discussed in 4
- What other languages might have Type II pronouns? (Lao appears to be one)
- Determine whether Type II pronouns are exclusive to the East/Southeast Asian region or if they exist elsewhere
- Find other relevant properties that these languages share (e.g. subject initial, topic fronting, classifiers...)
- Determine whether Type II pronouns are subject to Binding Principles

LANGUAGE	φ Verb Agreement	Number Distinction	Grammatical Gender	Open Class	DD Pro Drop	Multiple Lvl's Formality	Humans Only	Kinship Terms/Titles
Japanese	×	×	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Korean	×	×	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Burmese	×	×	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Khmer	×	×	×	✓	✓	✓	×	✓
Vietnamese	×	×	×	✓	✓	✓	×	✓
Thai	×	×	×	✓	✓	✓	×	✓
Indonesian	×	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	✓*	✓

Table 2. Results

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