

**Background:** Ritter & Wiltschko (2018, 2019) have hypothesized that there is an abstract interactive layer of nominal structure that encodes the attitudes of the speaker and addressee towards the referent of the nominal (see also Wiltschko 2017). Ritter & Wiltschko (2018, 2019) expand on this further while also defining two types of formality distinctions in pronouns which are believed to originate in the *interactive structure*. Type I pronouns occur in languages like French and German with a T/V distinction, where the formal pronouns are recycled phi-features from an existing pronoun, and Type II pronouns occur in languages like Korean and Japanese where relevant content is not recycled but rather directly associated with the interactional structure. Type II pronoun languages have an open class of pronominal forms that encode information on the discourse context, such as the relative social status of the speaker and addressee, and the age and sex of the speaker and/or addressee. We know that Type I and Type II pronouns are different, but we do not yet know what other properties are associated with this typological distinction. The World Atlas of Language Structures (WALS) classifies Korean and Japanese as languages whose pronouns are “avoided for politeness” (Helmbrecht 2013). In this paper I explore the following research question: Do all languages whose pronouns are avoided for politeness have Type II pronouns?

**Methodology:** WALS lists seven languages, all spoken in East and Southeast Asia, as having pronouns that are avoided for politeness. This list includes Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Indonesian, Khmer, Thai, and Burmese (see Helmbrecht 2013). In this paper I will show that the following six properties are shared by all of these languages. **1) Relatively open-ended set of pronouns:** Type II pronouns do not form a paradigm contrastive for phi-features. **2) No subject-verb agreement:** If Type II pronouns lack phi-features, it would be expected that they do not trigger subject-verb agreement and, as preliminary research shows, this is the case in all the languages in this study. **3) No singular/plural distinction:** As Type II pronouns are not assumed to be composed of phi-features, it would not be expected that these pronouns have a grammatical number distinction. **4) Pronouns can only refer to humans:** If Type II pronouns denote social proximity and relative social status of the speech act participants, it would be expected that they can only refer to humans, as is the case in Korean and Japanese. **5) Pronouns form a natural class with kinship terms and titles of address:** Because titles of address and kinship terms are open-ended and context-dependent, it is also believed that these are formed in the interactive structure and are often used in lieu of Type II pronouns. **6) Pronouns rarely used as arguments:** If arguments including pronouns are normally DPs and Type II pronouns have a more complex structure, it would not be expected that they typically occur in argument position.

**Significance:** This study will serve as an independent test of the interactive structure hypothesis. The results could have important typological implications regarding certain language families, or languages of particular regions. It may also offer some insight into how children acquire pronouns of this type, and how L2 learners can learn to use this complex system of pronouns.

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**What type of pronouns do Korean and Japanese have?**

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