Second Person Deixis in Japanese
and Power Semantics

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Introduction

Selection of an address form by a speaker gives a direct linguistic cue for status relationship with the hearer which, in combination with situational factors, determines the style, development, and subsequent outcome of a conversation. Various second person deictic systems are found in the world's languages from relatively simple to complex kinds such as in Japanese. Taking the second person pronoun as the prototypical instance of address form, this article will examine the Japanese second person pronouns and identify the general principles which govern the communicative uses of them. Central to the present descriptive framework is the sociolinguistic notion of power which manifests itself in various speaker-hearer relationships and determines the appropriate use of the second person pronouns for mutual address. Reference will be made to the 1977 power semantic study of second person pronominals in Romance and Germanic languages by Brown and Gilman to draw insight from their findings for enriching the present description as well as for comparing the cross-lingual pronominal characteristics from which we may predict possible problems in intercultural communication due to the incorrect assessment of relative power status and the application of address forms.

Development of Romance and Germanic Second Person Pronouns

In a 1977 article, 'The Pronouns of Power and Solidarity,' Brown and Gilman explained the historical circumstances in which the second person plural pronoun came to acquire a sense of respect in the Romance and Germanic languages and was reinterpreted as the address form for the socially superior. The subsequent development and the uses of the singular deferential pronouns in the second person

were explained with clarity, using the notion of power and different aspects of power such as sharing or non-sharing, and the associated notion of solidarity which is based on equal power sharing.   Romance and Germanic singular second person pronouns consist of common and deferential or, more currently, formal types.

	COMMON	DEFERENTIAL/Formal
Latin	tu	vos
Italian	tu	Lei (< voi)
Spanish	tu	usted (< vos)
French	tu	vous
German	du	Sie (< Ihr)
English	thou	you (< ye)

The uses of these pronouns are determined along the two sociolinguistic dimensions of power: non-reciprocal and reciprocal power.   Non-reciprocal power separates the empowered from the unpowered, creating non-equal social relationships, and reciprocal power generates a more or less equal social status by power sharing which in turn promotes solidarity.   The plural deferential pronouns were developed in the domain of non-reciprocal power for addressing the empowered superiors.   Social superiors in turn reciprocated the non-deferential common pronouns to their subordinates.   Along the dimension of reciprocal power the socially privileged also addressed each other with the deferential pronouns for solidarity or for mere formality.   During the course of time, the semantics of non-reciprocal power which governed the second person pronouns became obsolete.   As a result, the two dimensional pronominal system has become reorganized along the single dimension of reciprocal power through the process which is abstracted in the following.

Reciprocal Power			
	Solidarity	Solidarity	Nonsolidarity
Non-Reciprocal	V ÷ V	T ÷ T	V ÷ V
Power	◊ ›		
	T ÷ T	-	-

Currently, the T-pronoun or the common second person address continues to promote solidarity among the speakers who are perceived as equals.   In contrast, the mutual address which is carried out with the V-pronoun or the formal second person plural pronoun no longer brings the empowered together for solidarity, rather it merely keeps a

distance between interlocutors for politeness or out of unconcern. In short, the T-pronoun is a sign of intimacy, whereas the V-pronoun means being aloof.

Development of Japanese Second Person Pronouns

Unlike Romance and Germanic languages, no generic second person pronoun has developed in Japanese. All the pronouns of address which are cited in the following from linguistic dictionaries and grammatical descriptions of Japanese are marked for social status, gender, age differences as well as relative intimacy to the speaker. In addition, second person pronouns in the common category for casual, everyday type speech further divide into intimate and familiar subcategories in accordance with the degrees of vulgarity or crudeness of the speakers rather than psychological distance from the addressee. Again the formal category in the Japanese pronominal system does not classify pronouns for deference, but ties them to non-casual speech situations.

COMMON				FORMAL
Intimate		Familiar		
Male	Female	Male	Female	
omae	anta	kimi	anata	anata

Furthermore, each of the formal and common varieties are marked for genders. Number is not morphologically encoded in Japanese pronouns. Pronouns can be pluralized with suffixes such as *anata-tachi* 'you, plural' but such plural pronominals have no deferential function.

In fact, all the second person pronouns which are commonly used in current Japanese developed as deferentials from nominal or demonstrative origins for avoiding direct personal address to superiors out of courtesy. *Omae* and *anata*, for example, which began to evolve during the Edo Period (1603-1867) meant literally 'in front of' and 'over there', respectively. *Kimi* used to mean one's master. Much earlier *anata* used to refer a third person politely, but the shift from third person reference to deferential second person address seems to have occurred in the early eithteenth century (Okuaki 1988:130). Furthermore, the deferential sense began to weaken in the late nineteenth century until it became totally lost. Similar semantic downgrading has resulted in levelling the Romance and Germanic second person pronouns into a single dimensional system. In contrast, the second person pronouns in Japanese continue degenerating along the dimension of non-reciprocal power, hence they are not only used among equals for solidarity but also for lowering an addressee in subordinate positions. Today, *anata* together with its reduced form *anta* as well as *omae* 'common, intimate, male speech'

and *kimi* 'common, familiar, male speech' designate an addressee of equal or lesser social status. A paradigmatic gap created by the loss of deferential address forms is being remedied by a large number of quasi-pronouns or lexical deferentials which have been added to Japanese second person deixis. These are similar in form to the Romance and Germanic vocative pronouns such as surnames with official titles, occupational identifiers, and kinship terms, but can function independently as a second person propositional argument.

Semantic Characteristics of Second Person Pronouns in Japanese

Common Intimate Second Person Pronouns

These pronouns are associated with informal, everyday speech, and as a rule in Japanese, the more colloquial the speech, the more clearly pronounced is the gender identity of the speaker. The masculine address form *omae* is used among male speakers who are lower on the social hierarchy in terms of occupation, education, moral values, and age. Its users are of two kinds: those who use it habitually in daily life, and those who only use it in intimate, unsupervised conversation. For the first group the use of *omae* not only boasts their social class identity but also is a show of defiance against their social superiors. The use of *omae* by the latter is found in young male speech up to the pre-collegiate stage, and the absence of adult authority figures such as parents, teachers, and policemen is commonly presupposed from the scene of discourse. Although motivations may be different, the usage of *omae* by these two groups has the same function of generating solidarity to tie them together in a strong comraderie. Thus the principle of solidarity generally governs the use of *omae*, but we may not disregard that the use of *omae* among the latter is also constrained by the relative power relations between the interlocutors.

In contrast, the feminine common pronoun *anta* is used almost exclusively to address females of equivalent or lesser status. Commonly, females are conservative in their pronominal uses, and even young females seldom cross the linguistic gender line to risk the offense of an audience superviser. On the other hand, crossing the linguistic gender line is tolerated at this speech level, and male and female speakers may address each other with the pronouns of opposite gender under the circumstances in which solidarity relationship supersedes the gender-based power relation .

The common informal pronouns *omae* and *anta* may also be applied non-reciprocally to subordinates. The pronoun *omae* may be used by males for addressing people of lesser status of either gender such as one's wife, one's children, one's employees, one's servants, and younger persons. The female pronoun *anta* is likewise applied in speaking to lower status males or females such as a daughter and son,

younger sister and brother, maid, store assistant, hair dresser, salesmen, and so on. For the sake of solidarity, female speakers may also use the male pronoun *omae*. For that matter, dominant males may also cross the gender boundary and use the feminine non-reciprocal *anta* to young females and female employees, servants, and the like. The male use of *anta*, however, may achieve a patronizing effect rather than solidarity with the subordinates. In short, the reciprocal and non-reciprocal uses of gendered pronouns follow the formula of putting the addressee of the same gender in equivalent or non-equivalent positions, although the speakers may disregard gender distinctions for the sake of comradarie relationships between males and females.

Common Familiar Second Person Pronouns

As a general rule, the higher the speaker's status is along the social hierarchy, the more conformist is his or her linguistic behavior to social convention and etiquette. For this reason, the male and female common familiar pronouns *kimi* and *anata* are mainly confined to reciprocal, solidarity use between the interlocutors of the same gender, approximately of the same age, and of the similar social status. Interestingly, however, *kimi* and *anata* may mutually overcome the gender differences in such circumstances as indicating strong affection or an emotional bond between lovers and married couples. Addressing a female with the male pronoun *kimi*, for example, implies the elevation of a female addressee to equal status of the male and sharing the same gender identity. A similar effect is obtained when a female addresses a male with the female pronoun *anata*. When a male contacts a female with the female pronoun *anata*, he is stepping into female linguistic territory, thereby making the female addressee at ease on her own territorial grounds. Thus in the process of courtship, a male may use the female pronoun *anata* to an addressee at an earlier stage and *kimi* at a more advanced stage. Between married couples, distributions of masculine and feminine pronouns of address seem to be patterned by age. A younger husband tends to address his wife with the male pronoun *kimi*, while the older husband uses the female pronoun *anata*. In contrast, females, even during courtship or marriage seldom cross the male pronominal boundary and adopt the reciprocal use of *kimi*.

Thus, in heterogender encounters, females readily accept the entry of males into their own linguistic territory yielding to the male-dominated power relationship, but they themselves would hardly venture into the male pronominal area. Customarily, to avoid conflict with gender-based rules of mutual address, the adult male and female speaker of common familiar level speech address each other by either last or first names. The asymmetry in male-female address forms for expressing affection may also be explained by invoking the principles of power semantics. Primarily, male-oriented non-

reciprocal power dictates the heterogender address, and the equal sharing of power is also initiated by males who alone have free access to either of the gendered pronouns.

One of the exceptions to the regular rules for gendered pronouns is often observed in very young females. In mixed company young females use either male or female pronouns to address their male counterparts, but males may not reciprocate the same communicative behavior. Younger males appear to be more conservative in their speech habit than females, but as they grow older these communicative roles become reversed. In adulthood, only males give the non-reciprocal male pronoun *kimi* to women and have the privilege of using the reciprocal female pronoun *anata*.

Another exception is occupational crossing of the gender boundary. To take one example, it has become predominantly common for female secondary school teachers to address the male only or male and female student groups by male pronoun *kimi* or sometimes *omae*. Considering the conventional male orientation in heterogender verbal exchange, it is understandable that the females adopt the male pronominal forms of address in order to gain solidarity or dictate non-reciprocal power relations with the male students.

The non-reciprocal use of the male pronoun *kimi* is socially institutionalized with reference to the power hierarchy. The pronoun *kimi* is used in public places by superior males to address subordinate males and females. Examples are a company boss to younger executives, executives to lower rank employees, a customer to service staff, a teacher to his students, and so on. For obvious reasons, in intimate interactions such as among family members the pronoun *kimi* is hardly used by dominant males to subordinates. Usually male or female children, for example, receive the first name address by their parents or other adults.

In contrast, even when the common familiar feminine pronoun *anata* is directed to less powerful females and males, it generates only ambiguous power relationships among them. Since the uses of *anata* among equals and with subordinates are practically indistinguishable, it may be safe to conclude that there is no non-reciprocal use of the female pronoun *anata*. As mentioned above, the pronoun *anata* was historically derived from a demonstrative pronoun for the sake of keeping an addressee at a politeness distance from the speaker. While its degenerate form *anta* followed its own course of development and acquired a distinct semantic identity as the address form in common intimate female speech, the more formal and familiar *anata* seems to have maintained much of the demonstrative characteristics and therefore, its use has been very weakly subjected to power semantics. Our findings of the common second person pronouns, at least in their normative uses, are now summed up in the following diagram.

Solidarity/Reciprocal Power	
Common	
Intimate	Familiar

	Male	Female	Male	Female
	omae ÷ omae ÷ anta	÷ anta	kimi ÷ kimi '	anata ÷ anata
Non-reciprocal Power	◊ omae	◊ anta	◊ kimi	

÷	reciprocal mutual address
'	direction of gender-based address
◊	non-reciprocal address

Along the dimension of non-reciprocal power, all the common pronouns are used to address the subordinates except for the formal female pronoun *anata*. Along the solidarity/reciprocal dimension of power, all the common nouns have intra- and inter-gender uses among social equals except for the female pronoun *anata* which alone lacks cross-gender exchange with the male pronoun *kimi*. The male speaker may use the masculine pronoun *kimi* with the female addressee and also receive the feminine pronoun *anata* from the female speaker, but he would never be addressed with *kimi* by a woman. The systematic asymmetry between the familiar female pronoun *anata* and all the other pronouns along the dimensions of solidarity/ reciprocal and non-reciprocal power may be attributed to socio-cultural constraints on the linguistic behavior of female speakers of higher status not to dominate or compete with men in communicative interaction.

Formal Second Person Pronoun

The only member of the formal second person category is *anata*, and it happens to be morphologically identical to the common familiar female pronoun *anata*. They are also semantically similar in their inherent ambivalence to power relations and distancing effects which evolve from their common demonstrative origin. The formal pronoun *anata*, however, is gender-neutral. Although it is often and erroneously cited as a generic second person pronoun in exemplary textbook dialogues, pedagogical grammars, and other context-free metacommunications, it has only marginal use in highly restrictive contexts. Due to the diminishing sense of politeness, the reciprocal use of the pronoun *anata* is confined to exchanges between virtual strangers for whom there are no niches in the power hierarchy.

On the other hand, the semantic downgrading of the formal pronoun *anata* generates the semantic reversal of impoliteness in its non-reciprocal use, resulting in the

lowering and alienating effect on the addressee. Typical non-reciprocal power relations which accompany the use of the formal pronoun *anata* are the likes of interrogation, cross examination, interview, accusation, denunciation, reproach, and so on which put the addressee at a disadvantage. In these situations the formal pronoun *anata* means an insult to the subordinate recipient, causing a great deal of offense. Of all the non-reciprocal uses of second person pronouns, none would probably assign a more impersonal and asymmetric status relationship between the speaker and the addressee than the formal second person pronoun.

Based on these semantic characteristics, a further systematic comparison of the homomorphic formal pronoun *anata* and the feminine pronoun *anata* reveals that their functions are exact opposites of each other along the two dimensions of power and solidarity. On one hand, along the dimension of reciprocal power, the feminine pronoun *anata* promotes solidarity with the addressee of equal status, whereas the formal pronoun *anata* suppresses solidarity by alienating the interlocuter.

	Solidarity/ Reciprocal power	
	Common Familiar Female	**Formal**
	anata ÷ anata	anata ÷ anata
Non-reciprocal	◊	◊
Power	-	anata

÷	reciprocal mutual address
◊	non-reciprocal address

Along the dimension of non-reciprocal power, on the other hand, the female pronoun *anata* has not developed a corresponding form, while the non-reciprocal formal pronoun *anata* is maximally functional in lowering the status of the subordinate addressee. The discrepancy between these two pronouns may be attributable to the separate development of the distancing function which they have inherited from their common demonstrative origin. The distancing function has been adopted by the formal pronoun *anata* to alienate and lower the addressees.   In the domain of female speech, on the other hand, the distancing function is embraced for the sake of politeness in order to avoid explicit power relations through direct address.

Conclusion

The superficially complicated pattern of the second person pronouns in Japanese has been studied by application of the notion of power as a main descriptive strategy which also facilitates an almost impossible task of comparing the diverse pronominal systems of Japanese and of the Romance and Germanic languages. It turns out that what appears to be idiosyncratic characteristics of Japanese second person pronouns have a semantic resemblance with totally unrelated pronominal systems. As the result of semantic downgrading of the deferentials which occurred in these languages in common, the solidarity T-pronoun and the non-solidarity V-pronouns have evolved along the dimension of reciprocal power. [See the chart below.]

The processes of these evolutions, however, are quite different cross-linguistically. In the Romance-Germanic languages, the deferential V-pronouns were removed from the dimension of non-reciprocal power and became aligned with the solidarity T-pronouns along the dimension of reciprocal power. Consequently, the Romance-Germanic pronominal systems were levelled into a single dimensional paradigm in which the deferential V-pronoun was semantically reinterpreted as the non-solidarity pronoun for formal address. In Japanese, the downgrading of the deferential pronoun *anata* has split itself into the formal

RECIPROCAL POWER				
Solidarity			**Non-solidarity**	
Romance-Germanic	**Japanese**		**Romance-Germanic**	**Japanese**
T-pronoun	omae anta kimi anata (Female)		V-pronoun	anata (formal)
Non-reciprocal Power -	◇ omae anta kimi		◇ -	◇ anata (formal)

or non-solidarity reciprocal*anata* and the non-reciprocal pronoun *anata* of disrespect for lowering the addressee. Since the semantic change is still in progress toward the opposite direction of deference, eventually the non-reciprocal *anata* may oust the formal reciprocal *anata* from the Japanese second person pronominal system such as sketched in the following:

Deferential	Non-deferential	Non-deferential
x		
◊	' anata ÷ anata	
anata		' anata
' anata		
	◊	◊
	x	x

÷   reciprocal mutual address

···'   direction of chronological changes

◊   non-reciprocal address

Thus the semantic shift in the meaning of the previously deferential pronoun *anata* did not eliminate the two dimensional system of Japanese second person pronouns. Hence the asymmetric relationship between the Romance-Germanic and Japanese pronominal paradigms have evolved.

	Reciprocal Power			
	Romance-Germanic		**Japanese**	
	T ÷ T V ÷ V		T ÷ T	V ÷ V
Non-reciprocal			◊	
Power			V	

T   T-pronoun

V   V-pronoun

÷   reciprocal mutual address

Contemporary Romance-Germanic T-pronouns and the Japanese T-pronoun *anata* along the dimension of reciprocal power are similar in the meaning to promote solidarity among the equally powered. While there is also a close correspondence between the Romance-Germanic and Japanese V-pronouns in their function of alienating the addressee, the Japanese formal V-pronoun *anata* is more marked for the context of occurrences than its Romance-Germanic counterparts. As has been observed above, its use is restricted for a virtual stranger with whom the speaker's power relationship is ambiguous. Addressing some acquaintance with the V-pronoun may have a bizarre pragmatic effect on the addressee and might cause a great deal of offense. Worse still, the use of the homophonous non-reciprocal pronoun of disrespect *anata* further

complicates the rules for mutual address. Okuaki (1988), for example, reports on unconventional exchanges of address such as speaking to superiors with *anata* in the cases of striking workers versus a managerial staff and disgruntled students versus a professor. Furthermore, the pronoun *anata* is also used by superiors to address subordinates such as parents to children and owners to a pet animal. The former may be interpreted as the non-reciprocal use for the sake of reversal of power relationships by lowering the status of the addressee. The latter is likely a transitional phenomenon for the speaker to raise the status of the addressees for solidarity which contradicts the semantics of the formal pronoun *anata* which alienates the addressee out of politeness or unconcern. The complex nature of the second person pronoun *anata* does not allow for static interpretation, since even a single utterance of *anata* may have a multitude of meanings depending on the contextual variables. For this reason misuse of the pronoun *anata* in interpersonal address may cause not only intercultural but intra-cultural communication failure.

The loss of the deferential pronoun has created a paradigmatic gap and the semantic anomaly with the pronoun *anata*. In order to remedy the deficiencies and serve various communicative needs, an elaborate system of lexical deferentials and address forms have been imported in Japanese second person deixis. These quasi-pronouns consist, for example, of occupational types, titles, social roles, proper names, and all other attributes of the addressees. In fact, these pronominal supplements are much more frequently used in day to day communications, since matching any of these with the given power relations between the speaker and the addressee is quite obvious. Even a stranger can be addressed with using his or her general attributes such as *ojisan* 'Mr.', *okusan* 'Ma'am', or *oneesan* 'Miss' rather than risking offense or insult on the recipient. The study of Japanese pronouns in conjunction with the lexical pronouns may give the second person pronominal system a different perspective such as being suggested by some linguists (Suzuki 1988).

The goal of the present study was to describe the interactions between the second person pronouns as the prototypical form of address and a multitude of power relations between the addressees rather than the broader communicative functions of pronouns. The notion of power which was proposed by Brown and Gilman (1977) for the study of pronouns is essentially valid for the description of the Japanese pronouns of address, and, in addition, the power-based descriptive framework has captured interlingual characteristics of pronominal systems in the Romance-Germanic languages and Japanese. For a more detailed analysis of the Japanese pronominal system, however, the notion of power needs to be substantially enriched to account for various levels of power relationships which are unique to Japanese society such as between males and females, socially superior and inferior, and interlocutors and audience as well as degrees of psychological distance or empathy.

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