

New Pronouns and Loss of Pronouns in English and Japanese

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Introduction

This paper will discuss origins of new pronoun forms and loss of pronouns in English and Japanese. The study forms part of a series of working papers on personal pronouns: Howe (2010), a preliminary comparison of personal pronouns in English and Japanese, Howe (2009a) on pronoun morphology, Howe (forthcoming a) on reanalysis in pronouns, Howe (forthcoming b) on pronouns and politeness, and Howe (forthcoming c) on reference and ellipsis.

In some of the categories discussed in this paper forms can occur in place of personal pronouns on an ad hoc basis — for example reflexives in English *My sister and myself went sailing yesterday*. Titles in personal reference are or have been common in a number of European languages, for instance Swedish *Har professorn läst min uppsats?* ('Has the professor [= you] read my essay?'), and such use is of course very common in Japanese, as in *Sensei wa mô mesigarimasita ka*. Further categories are demonstratives or directional deictic expressions, such as Japanese *kotira*

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and German *Was macht Peter? Der schläft noch*, and compounds such as English *you two, you guys* and Japanese *bokura futari*.

However, here only 'permanent' new personal pronoun forms will be discussed in detail, although a distinction between ad hoc and 'permanent' is not always clear cut, and some ad hoc usages develop to 'permanent' new forms, as will be discussed later. One possible test for a pronoun would be whether a form — *kotira* or *anata* for example — can occur only in personal pronoun use and no longer in its original meaning or function.

Origins of new pronoun forms

Suzuki (1978: 119) makes an illuminating point that in the Indo-European language family, the same pronoun — for example the etymon of English *I*, Latin *ego* and French *je* — has been used as a 1st person singular pronoun 'continuously and consistently' for thousands of years. This, he maintains, is a striking contrast to Japanese.

The Modern Japanese forms *watakusi* and *boku* do not date back to Old Japanese, nor does the use of *kimi*, *omae*, *anata* and *kisama* as forms of address, 'although some of these terms may have been present earlier as members of noun categories' (Suzuki 1978: 120). Smith (1983: 77, drawing on Miller 1967: 32) states that a 'quite remarkable feature of personal referents in Japan is the great rapidity with which they have changed historically. Most of those found in Meiji letters and diaries of only a century ago, no less than almost the entire inventory of personal referents widely employed in the Tokugawa period, have passed out of use almost completely.' Suzuki states (1978: 120): 'In Japanese, since the beginning of history, new personal pronouns for the speaker, as well as for the hearer, have been created one

after another in rapid succession. Each new term has replaced an earlier one. Furthermore, *every new pronoun has been borrowed from another category where it had a concrete meaning*' (emphasis S.H.).

In Suzuki's (1978: 120-121) view, 'Japanese pronouns are thus markedly different from their Indo-European counterparts'. However, in Japanese both forms of address and forms of self-reference vary sociolinguistically. If we look at forms of address in Indo-European languages, we also find a great many changes — including loss of pronouns and new pronoun forms. One need only mention *thou* and *ye/you* in English, as well as the innovative *y'all* and *youse* pronouns to illustrate this, and many other examples could be cited from European languages, some of which will be discussed later in this paper. Further, even where Indo-European languages do indeed retain the original 2nd person singular pronoun, as in the French *tu* and German *du* cited by Suzuki, it may be socially marked as a T¹ form. Although this is not a 'visible', formal change, it is a significant semantic one, and the pronoun has shown considerable 'fluctuating social deixis' over time.² We cannot say simply, then, as Suzuki (1978: 119) claims, that the pronoun has 'retained its identity'. These forms do indeed often show significant changes — 'visible' or otherwise — and can involve not only 2nd

¹ For convenience, socially differentiated forms of address will be referred to in this paper as T and V (from Latin *tu* and *vos*), where T is -formal and V +formal. For criticism of these terms, see Howe (1996).

² In requests in English, the 1st p. singular pronoun *me* is often replaced colloquially by the plural *us*, for example:

Lend **us** [= me] a tenner

Do **us** [= me] a favour

Give **us** [= me] a kiss

This parallel to the *tu-vos* distinction in many European (and other) languages, which we should rather term E(go) and N(os), will be discussed further in Howe (forthcoming b).

person pronouns but also, as the German polite pronoun *Sie* demonstrates, other persons.

We have the following etymologies for selected Japanese pronoun forms (Suzuki, 1978: 120-121, Shibatani, 1990: 371-272, Takeuchi 1999: 67 & 69):

Table 1: Etymologies of selected Japanese pronouns

watakusi 'I'	'private or personal' or 'private (thing)'
boku 'I'	'(your) servant'
kimi 'you'	'lord' or 'emperor'
kisama 'you'	'noble person'

anata 'you'	'that direction' or 'yonder'
omae 'you'	'front'
kare 'he'	'that/one over there'
kanozō 'she'	'distal-adnomial-female'

The table shows that these Japanese pronoun forms derive from some kind of title, for either the speaker or the addressee, or from some kind of directional deictic. Shibatani (1990: 371-272) states that etymologically most of the Japanese pronouns derive 'from regular nouns', citing *watakusi* from 'private (thing)', *kimi* from 'emperor' and *anata* from 'yonder'. Smith (1983: 78) states that most Japanese 'personal referents' were words that originally denoted place or direction, or were titles. On the directional deictics,

Suzuki (1978: 12) writes that 'These demonstratives were ... diverted to a suggestive and euphemistic use to *indicate indirectly persons in those places or directions*' (emphasis S.H.).

The sections below will compare origins of pronoun forms in English and other languages with Japanese.

From directional deictics

Takeuchi (1999: 66) states that 'Although Japanese during much of its history has done without paradigms of uniquely defined personal pronouns, it should not be overlooked that there exists a recurrent derivative pattern in the language for directional deictic expressions to assume personal reference.' For 3rd person reference, she states (1999: 69) that *kare* 'he' derives from the premodern distal deictic 'that/one over there' and *kanozō* 'she' from *ka-no-zō* 'distal-adnomial-female'.

Takeuchi adds (1999: 66-67) 'on reflection it seems semantically very appropriate that a language with the kind of fluctuating social deixis as Japanese, should extend the directional series with its inherent cline "more or less close-distant" ... in this way'.

Thus from the table above, including *anata* and *omae*, we can see that a number of the Japanese personal pronouns derive from some kind of directional deictic.

In the Germanic languages, too, demonstratives are relatively common in personal pronoun use or as personal pronouns. In the Scandinavian languages, the 3rd person masculine and feminine forms (e.g. Modern Swedish *han* 'he' and *hon* 'she') are likely demonstrative in origin (see Seebold 1984: 61, Brøndum-Nielsen 1965: 37-38 with references). And the *h-*

in the 3rd person pronouns, e.g. English *he, him, his, her, hers*, earlier more widespread, Frisian *hy* 'he', *him* 'him', *hja* 'she', *har* 'her' *harren* 'them', Dutch *hij* 'he', *hem* 'him', *haar* 'her', *het* 'it', *hun, hen* 'them', and Old Saxon *he*, is also likely deictic in origin (compare English *here, hither*, German *heute* 'today', *heuer* 'this year', Latin *cis* 'on this side').

Further, in the Scandinavian languages, the 3rd p. sing. neuter (e.g. Modern Swedish *det* 'that/it') and 3rd p. plural (*de* 'those/they') are not formally personal pronouns, but demonstratives. In other words, there are no separate 3rd person singular neuter or 3rd person plural personal pronouns in the Scandinavian languages — demonstratives are used³.

For Scandinavian, rather than saying that personal pronouns are lacking in the 3rd p. sing. neuter and 3rd p. plural, it seems best, following Werner (1990: 178), to speak of a 3rd person paradigm which is differentiated morphologically into personal pronouns and demonstratives in the masculine and feminine singular.

Table 2: Example Scandinavian 3rd p. personal and demonstrative pronouns

Personal	Demonstrative
han 'he'	den 'it/that' ⁴
hon 'she'	det 'it/that' ⁵

³ Thus the form that was borrowed into English as *they* (*them-their*) from Scandinavian (see further below) is in origin also a demonstrative.

⁴ Nonpersonal common gender. On the innovatory common gender nonpersonal pronoun *den* in Danish, Swedish and Norwegian Bokmål, see Howe (1996: 331-334).

⁵ Nonpersonal neuter.

de 'those/they' ⁶
dem
deras

Further, demonstratives in personal pronoun use are very common in German:

Was macht Peter? **Der/er** schläft noch.

What's Peter doing? DEM/PER PRON is still asleep.

And Dutch:

Is Hans thuis? Nee, **hij/die** is niet thuis.

Is Hans at home? No, PER/DEM PRON is not at home.

Here we can perhaps view the demonstrative and personal pronouns as stronger and weaker 3rd person forms respectively. A demonstrative can be said to have stronger reference than a corresponding personal pronoun (and in the Germanic languages often also a stronger phonetic form). This use of personal pronoun and demonstrative forms could be termed an extended paradigm (cf. Bellmann 1990: 210).

Many if not all of the Germanic languages show demonstrative forms in personal pronouns use to some extent, in some even as prop 'it'. For

⁶ In spoken Swedish, *de-dem* have been replaced by a common subj./obj. form *dom* – see further Howe (1996: 334-338).

example, in English the unstressed demonstrative *that* can be used as prop in East Anglia (see Howe 1996: 101 & 155):

That's [ðəs] raining again

Compare also Frisian (Saterlandic)

Dät rient

And Afrikaans

Dit reën

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Wright (1905: 272) records *that* for 'it' in parts of the West Riding of Yorkshire and the Isle of Man as well as East Anglia. The *Linguistic Atlas of England (LAE)* (map M73) shows *that* for 'it' in Norfolk, but it is also found in Cambridgeshire, as in my example above. Trudgill (1990: 82-83) notes it for East Anglia and the South Midlands.

From reflexives

In Japanese the reflexive *zibun* 'self' can be used for formal self-reference, primarily by male speakers (for statistics see references in Takeuchi 1999: 65). It can also be used to refer to the hearer/subject 'in situations where the speaker empathetically probes into the interlocutor's discourse about himself' (see Takeuchi 1999: 64-65, Hinds 1986: 262-263). Some examples are

given below (adapted from Makino and Tsutsui 1986/1989: 159-160):

Tutida wa Satiko ga **zibun** o aisite iru koto o siranakatta.

Tsuchida didn't know that Sachiko loved himself [= him].

Stephen wa zyunko no koto o omotte ita. Kanozyo wa **zibun** to
kekkonsite kureru n darô ka

Stephen was thinking of Junko. Is she going to marry myself [= me]?

In English, reflexives can occur in place of personal pronouns, for
example (from Quirk et al. 1985: 359-360):

My sister and **I/myself** went sailing yesterday.

Except for **us/ourselves**, the whole village was asleep.

This is a great tribute to the Scout Movement, and to **you/yourself** as
its leader.

Guerro's friends made their peace with the gang. As for **him(self)**,
there was little he could do but await the inevitable bullet in his back.

Quirk et al. (1985: 359) term such usage 'semi-emphatic', i.e., as some of the
demonstratives above, the reflexive conveys somewhat more force or
direction than the ordinary personal pronoun. Additionally, like *zibun*,
myself and the other reflexive forms are felt to be somewhat more formal
than *me* etc., although Quirk et al. add that many feel *myself* in such use to
be 'a hyperurbanism, a genteel evasion of the normal personal pronoun'.
This is because many speakers prefer to avoid the combination *X and me*

even when (historically) correct, as it is perceived to be a low socioeconomic shibboleth; they therefore replace *me* by *myself*.⁷

They have never invited Margaret and **me/myself** to dinner.

These, then, are examples of reflexives in personal pronoun use, both in Japanese and English. However, in the Continental West Germanic languages, closely related to English, we have an example of *replacement* of a personal pronoun by a reflexive. Here the masculine and neuter sing. genitive pronoun *is*, *es* (cognate with English *his*) was replaced by the reflexive *sin*, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Personal pronouns from reflexive in Continental West Germanic languages

Old Frisian <i>sin</i> , -(e)s	Modern Frisian <i>sin</i> etc.
Middle Dutch <i>sijns</i> , -(e)s	Modern Dutch <i>zijn</i> , Afrikaans <i>syne</i>
Old Saxon <i>is</i> (es)	Middle Low German <i>sîn</i> etc.
Old High German <i>sîn</i> , es	New High German <i>sein</i>

Pronoun borrowing

On the face of it, borrowing pronouns — or borrowing of any function words at the core of a language — may seem unlikely. However, the

⁷ Compare the hypercorrection of *me* to *I* in phrases such as *From my sister and I*.

English 3rd person plural *they* (*them*, *their*) was borrowed from Scandinavian, replacing the native English forms *hīe-him-hiera* etc. There may also be other examples of borrowing in the pronouns in the Germanic languages: probably West Frisian *sy* 'she, they' from Dutch, and Swiss German (south Valais) *endsch andre* and *ier andre*, loan translations from Italian *noi altri*, *voi altri* (see Howe 1996: 102). And in English, the 3rd person plural forms are not the only Scandinavian pronouns attested: an eleventh-century inscription from Aldbrough church in Yorkshire reads 'Ulf let arœran cyrice for hanvm & for Gvnwara savla' (Ulf had this church built for him and for Gunnvor's soul). This inscription, in English, has the Scandinavian 3rd p. sing. masculine pronoun *hanum*, the Old English equivalent of which would have been *him*. For further discussion of this form, see Howe (1996: 154-155).

The origins of the 3rd person plural forms *they-them-their* in English are much less disputed than those of *she* (discussed briefly later in the paper): although it is possible that developments may have been influenced by the native English demonstrative, which is found in personal pronoun use in Old English and early Middle English, it is widely accepted that these new forms were borrowed from the Scandinavian settlers in Britain. The new pronouns are first attested in about 1200 and spread to varying extents southwards from the main areas of Scandinavian settlement in the North. The *Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English (LALME)* (maps 28 & 29, 39 & 40, 51 & 52) shows the extent of the new forms with initial *th-* and the native English *h-* forms in later Middle English.

Regular settlement by Scandinavians began in the second half of the ninth century, the majority settling in the North and East — the area

known as the Danelaw. Most of the new inhabitants were Danish, but there were also considerable numbers of Norwegians in the Northwest. Due to the scarcity of surviving linguistic records it is difficult to form a satisfactory picture of the use of English and Scandinavian during the period of contact; however, on the evidence of modern studies of language contact, loan words, phonological and grammatical change, and bilingualism are all possible developments.

As pointed out earlier in the paper, in the Scandinavian languages the 3rd person plural pronouns are demonstrative forms also used as personal pronouns. The Scandinavian pronouns borrowed into English are thus cognate with the native English demonstrative rather than with the personal pronoun. Modern English *they-them-theirs*, *their* correspond to Modern Danish *de-dem-deres* for example.

There was considerable difference between the spread of the *th-* forms in the nominative and in the objective and possessive pronouns. The LALME maps show clearly the situation in later Middle English: in the nominative the *th-* type had spread to all parts of the country, outnumbering by far the native English *h-* forms; in the objective and possessive pronouns, on the other hand, in the southern half of the country the native English *h-* types were still very much more common, far outnumbering the *th-* forms. This difference in the extent of the nominative and the objective and possessive clearly suggests that outside the main areas of Scandinavian settlement initially only the nominative 'they' was borrowed. This means, as Werner (1991: 388) points out, that several generations of Middle English speakers had a system of 3rd person pronouns with a nominative form 'they', objective 'hem' and possessive 'her(e)'. Chaucer, for example, from the

south of England, wrote *they-hem-hir(e)*, *her(e)*. And indeed, in Modern English the original objective form may still be retained as unaccented 'em 'them', as in *Sock it to 'em*.

This raises the question whether in the South the objective and possessive pronouns are loan forms at all, or whether in fact they represent a later indigenous development, by analogical extension of the *th-* formative from the nominative (cf. Werner 1991: 388-391). Such a development of a new form of a pronoun would not be without precedent in English (nor for that matter in other Germanic languages), for example the earlier preliterary extension of the *h-* formative to all 3rd person pronouns, as discussed in Howe (2009a). The eventual *th-* objective and possessive forms in the South could thus be interpreted not as immediate loans from Scandinavian, but rather as later developments based on the borrowed nominative (cf. Werner 1991: 391). However, as Werner states (1991: 389), the possible influence of the northern forms must also be recognised, and it is by no means impossible that the eventual southern *th-* forms are simply later borrowings from the North, where the pattern of the 3rd person pronouns all with the same initial *th-* would itself have been an important analogical factor.

The result of the borrowing of the Scandinavian pronouns, together with the development of *she* for example, was morphologically an increase in suppletion between 3rd person pronouns, in particular the nominative forms. The possible reasons behind these changes in the 3rd person pronouns in English are discussed further in Howe (1996: 160-165).

Table 4: Comparison of Old and Modern English 3rd person nominative pronouns

Old English	Modern English
hē	he
hēo	she
hit	it
hī	they

Compounds – blends

Definition of a compound or blend in the personal pronouns overlaps with addition of formatives such as the English nonstandard 2nd person plural *you(s)e* < *you* + regular noun plural allomorph. However, these and similar examples are not discussed here under sources of new personal pronouns.

Ad hoc compounding in English pronouns is common, for example *us two*, *you both*, *you lot* and *you guys*. Japanese also has ad hoc combinations such as *bokura futari* 'we/us two' (Hinds 1986: 254). Note that plural reference is quite indistinct, in the case of *you* of course, absolutely so. Even the 1st person plural 'we' in English and many languages specifies merely the presence of the speaker/writer in a group (see Howe 1996: 9-11). Therefore, it is perhaps not surprising that periphrasis is common.

A definition which can be used here of a new personal pronoun form from compounding/blending is (a) if it is regularly and obligatorily combined and/or (b) if it has merged to become a simplex form. Thus by this definition English *you + two*, *you + both*, or *you + lot* would not be regarded as new pronouns as combination is not consistent; Southern

American English *y'all*, on the other hand, would be regarded as a new pronoun by virtue of its consistent combination and development to a simplex form.

As discussed in Howe (2010), in Southern American English *y'all* fusion of the two elements 'you' and 'all' shows that this form has gone beyond the stage of simple ad hoc addition:

you + all > y'all [jɔ:l]

Y'all is widely used on all social levels in Southern American English and there also exists a colloquial *y'all's* as in 'I really like *y'all's* new car' ('your family's new car') (Quirk et al. 1985: 344). The *Dictionary of American Regional English* (F. G. Cassidy — personal communication) has on file for *y'all (come back)* examples from Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Missouri, Tennessee, Virginia, and general South.

English also has the nonstandard regional compound *you-uns* from 'you' + 'ones'. Similar new plural pronoun compound forms are found in Dutch with 'people' and possibly Frisian with 'man, men' (see Howe 1996: 79-80, 174), both languages closely related to English:

Dutch + 'people' (*liede*⁸) > jullie 'you-people' > 'you (plural)'

Possibly Frisian + 'man, men' > jemma(n)

As well as in Spanish, for example, with 'others':

⁸ Cognate with Old English *leode* 'people'.

nosotros, nosotras 'we'

vosotros, vosotras 'you (plural)'

As discussed in Howe (1996 and 2010), one reason for the addition of a lexical element rather than a pronominal formative with plural meaning is the lack of consistent morphological pattern in plural marking in the personal pronouns in English and other languages. A further reason is semantic, in that the personal pronouns obviously frequently refer to people, which may make lexical plurals such as 'people' (and ad hoc compounds such as 'you guys') more likely.

Lack of grammatical pattern as a factor in lexical addition can also be illustrated by pidgins where much of the original inflection is absent. In Melanesian Pidgin, none of the bound forms of English are attested. Here, we find the plural pronoun compound forms:

mifelə

jufelə

with addition of *-felə* ('fellow') to the singular *mi* ('I', 'me') and *ju* ('you') (data cited in Lehmann 1992: 270-271).

Note, though, that English regional nonstandard *yous(e)* does show the creation of a new distinct plural form by addition of regular noun plural inflection, as pointed out above, and further to some extent the grammaticalisation and analogical extension of *all* and (derivatives of) *liede* 'people' as pronominal plural markers in varieties of English, Dutch and Afrikaans. In English, for instance, addition of *-all* may further be found,

though to a lesser extent, in forms such as *we-all*, *we-all's*, *who-all* and *what-all*.

These examples show how new pronoun forms can develop from personal pronouns plus lexical elements from outside the personal pronoun paradigm.

Table 5: Example Japanese compound plural pronouns

watakusi-tati
watasi-tati
boku-tati
atasi-tati
anata-tati
kimi-tati
kare-tati
kanozyo-tati

Following Howe (1996, chapter 2), as Japanese noun phrases generally do not have a grammatical number distinction, we would not expect to find pronouns with grammatical plurals. As discussed in Howe (2010), the Japanese plural pronoun compounds with *-tati*, *-domo* and *-gata* can be compared with English compounds such as *you guys*. Unlike *y'all*, however, they have not become simplex forms.

Although Takeuchi (1999: 64) states that Japanese forms such as *watasi*, *watakusi*, *anata* and *kimi* 'do not form regular paradigms',

Japanese plural pronouns such as *watasitati*, *anatata* and so on are in fact more regular than their English equivalents. Indeed, according to Hinds (1986: 250 & 252), Japanese personal pronouns are obligatorily marked for number. Kaiser, Ichikawa, Kobayashi and Yamamoto (2001: 370) state in contrast that 'Japanese personal pron. do not usually distinguish number ... in the first and second person', though a suffix 'can optionally be used for plural'.

Takeuchi (1999: 64) points out the resemblance of the Japanese pronouns to other nouns with human referents, and in these plurals we can see this clearly. She also states (1999: 64) that 'like other animate nouns with definite referents, they require explicit expression of number'. In contrast again, however, Bunt (2003: 236) writes that a few nouns referring to people (and sometimes animals) can have the plural suffix *-tati* to mark them as plural, 'although this is not obligatory, and a plural meaning is also possible without the suffix'.

Takeuchi (1999: 69) gives the following plural morphemes, cited here in increasing formality:

- ra (informal)
- domo (humble)
- tati (plain)
- gata (exalted)

Example pronoun plurals are *karera*, *watakusidomo*, *watasitati*, *anatagata*. Example nouns with *-tati* are given below:

kodomotati	masako-san-tati
gakuseitati	dôbutsutati
senseitati	inutati
tomodati	

Sandhi

This type of development is generalisation of an unaccented pronoun from new sandhi forms resulting from clitic usage (Howe 1996: 88-91). Such developments from sandhi show that not only can an unaccented form derive from an orthotone pronoun – as in e.g. English [ɪm] from *him* or [ɜ:, ə] from *her* – but that also the opposite development can occur of an orthotone pronoun from an unaccented form.

Phonological modification of host and clitic pronoun is common in connected speech, for instance in English *betcha*, *wotcha* and *gotcha!* Compare the following examples (Gimson/Ramsaran 1989: 299ff.):

English linking/intrusive /r/ (some varieties)

I saw him yesterday – I saw-r-im [sɔ:rɪm] yesterday

I saw her yesterday – I saw-r-er [sɔ:rə] yesterday

I saw them yesterday – I saw-r-em [sɔ:rəm] yesterday

English coalescence of /t, d, s, z/ with /j/

What you want ... – What you [wɒtʃɔ] want

Would you? – Would you [wɒdʒɔ]?

In case you need it — In case you [keɪfʊ] need it
Has your letter come? — Has your [hæʒɔ:] letter come?

These examples occur only in their conditioning environment and do not represent the development of new separate pronoun forms as such. However, quite a number of examples occur in the Germanic languages of generalisation of sandhi forms also outside their original conditioning environment, resulting in new forms of a pronoun.

Examples include assimilation of verb ending (or conjunction) and enclitic pronoun, as in the following 1st p. plural and dual nom. forms 'we' and 'we two' with *m*-:

Table 6: Sandhi (assimilation) 1st p. plural and dual pronouns

German regional and Yiddish	mir
Some Dutch	me
Old Norwegian	mit, mér, Nynorsk me

And reanalysis of verb ending (or conjunction) as part of the pronoun, as in the following 2nd p. plural and dual forms:

Table 7: Sandhi (reanalysis) 2nd p. plural and dual pronouns

German regional	dir (cf. Standard German ihr)
Old Norwegian	þit, þér, Nynorsk de
Icelandic	þið, þér
Faroese	tit (tær)
Swedish	ni

For further examples see Howe (1996: 90-91).

Key here is that in speech SVO (subject-verb-object) order is less common in Germanic V2 (verb-second) languages than is sometimes supposed: often a sentence-initial adverbial results in inversion, i.e. positioning of the (nominal or pronominal) subject *after* the finite verb; similarly frequently the personal pronoun follows a subordinating conjunction (cf. Nübling 1992: 254-257). In spoken German, for example, constructions such as

Das weiss ich nicht
That (O) know (V) I (S) not
'I don't know'

are most common. Similarly in spoken Swedish, for instance

Det vet jag inte
That (O) know (V) I (S) not

Nübling's statistics for a sample of Swiss (Bern) German record 65.5% of nominative personal pronouns postverbally or after a subordinating conjunction, and this may even be an underestimate. Nübling concludes that this supports the assumption that the form of the orthotone pronoun is influenced by the clitic, in particular the enclitic form. Her statistics may well suggest a comparable distribution in other Germanic verb-second languages, and the relatively widespread occurrence of new personal pronoun subj. forms from sandhi in the Germanic languages — as shown in the examples here and in Howe (1996) — may support this.

Development of pronouns from titles

Titles in place of pronoun reference

'Title' here means a name or epithet signifying rank, office or function.⁹ As will be discussed in a forthcoming paper on pronouns and politeness, Japanese often uses titles where English uses pronouns (Hinds 1986: 238). When Japanese address a teacher or 'superior' at work, they are likely to use *sensei* 'teacher', *katyô (san)* '(section) chief' or similar. Other occupational titles or roles include for example (from Suzuki 1978: 113-114, Makino and Tsutsui 1986/1989: 31):

⁹ Collins English Dictionary and Thesaurus.

Table 8: Example titles in Japanese

yaoya-san	The greengrocer
sakanaya-san	The fishmonger
hanaya-san	The florist
okyaku-sama	The customer

And in the family, words designating family relationships are common. These include *otôsan* 'father', *okâsan* 'mother' and other kinship terms such as *ozîsan* 'grandfather', *obasan* 'aunt' and *onîsan* 'older brother' (Suzuki 1978: 114). These terms have many variants and familiar forms.

A few examples of title use in Japanese are given below (adapted from Bunt 2003):

Ikeda san mo ikimasu ka

Is Mr Ikeda [= you] going too?

Sensei wa mô mesiarimasita ka

Has professor [= you] already taken lunch?

Otôsan wa dô omoimasu ka

What does father [= you] think?

Titles can be used not only in addressing or referring to others, but also in self-reference, particularly when talking to children. For instance, Suzuki (1978: 112) gives the example of a father addressing his children:

Otōsan no iu koto o kiki-nasai

Listen to father [= me]

Or the same man to his nephew or niece:

Kurisumasu ni **ozisan** ga zitensya o purezento-siyō

Uncle [= I] will give you a bicycle for Christmas.

However, although this illustrates a very significant extent of title use, use of titles is certainly not exclusive to Japanese. In European languages, titles in place of personal pronoun reference are or have been common, for example:

Swedish

Har **professorn** läst min uppsats?

Has professor-DEF [= you] read my essay?

Frisian (West) (Tiersma 1985: 63)

Dominy hat in moaie wein kocht

Pastor [= you] bought a nice car

English

(Old-fashioned salesperson) Would **madam** prefer a larger size?

(Humorous wife to spouse) Would **his lordship** kindly get up off the sofa and do the washing up

Parliamentary debate

'Will **the Deputy Prime Minister** now give an undertaking to the House that **he** will intervene ...'

'Does **my right honourable friend** recognise that ... Does **he** also recognise the importance that ...'

'Yes, of course I recognise that ...'¹⁰

And in the family, titles can be used for self-reference when talking to children, for example:

Give **daddy** a kiss (spoken by father)

Mummy's going to work now (spoken by mother)

English speakers will also avoid using a 3rd person pronoun to refer to a person in their presence; if their prestige is very high, even in their absence. Here the pronoun is substituted by a name and/or title, for example:

Referring to someone in their presence

(Impolite) **She** has just joined our Department

(Polite) **Professor Smith** had just joined our Department

¹⁰ UK Parliament, House of Commons, 27 July 2010, www.parliament.uk.

Discussing a patient's health at the hospital bed

(Impolite) **He** has just had his appendix removed

(Polite) **Mr Jones** has just had his appendix removed

Father to a child

Sebastian, will you do the washing up?

(Impolite) Ask **her** [= mother] to do it. I'm busy.

(Polite) Can't you ask **mum** to do it? I'm busy right now.

Pronominalisation of titles

As shown in Table 1 at the beginning of the paper, several Japanese pronouns derive from some kind of title, for example:

Table 9: Japanese pronouns from titles

watakusi 'I'	'private or personal' or 'private (thing)'
boku 'I'	'(your) servant'
kimi 'you'	'lord' or 'emperor'
kisama 'you'	'noble person'

In other languages, we can find parallel developments. In Dutch, various explanations have been offered for the origin of the 2nd person V pronoun *u*, several of which are based on derivation from an abbreviated form of *Uwe Edelheid* or *Uwe Edele* 'Your Honour', often also assuming influence of the oblique and/or possessive forms of the 2nd p. plural pronoun (for further discussion, see Howe 1996: 227-229).

A development of *u* from *Uwe Edelheid*, *Uwe Edele* would show not only the use of titles as forms of address, but a further step of grammaticalisation to a personal pronoun. An early stage in the development of a title to a personal pronoun is probably its abbreviation (e.g. in Dutch *Uwe Edt*, *U Ed.*, *UE*) – a sign of more frequent use (whether in writing or speech) – compare the discussion in Howe (2009a) of the shortening of frequently used forms.

In Japanese, too, as also discussed in Howe (2009a) and (2010), there are several contracted forms of the 1st person 'watakusi' (cited in Makino and Tsutsui 1986/1989: 28-29), which suggests frequency of use and to some extent grammaticalisation from a title to a pronoun.

Table 10: Pronominalisation in Japanese

watakusi	very formal
atakusi	formal, female
watasi	formal
atasi	informal, female
wasi	informal, older male
assi	very informal, adult male, Tokyo Bay
atai	very informal/vulgar, female

Pronominalisation of titles is also found in other languages, one of the most well known of which is Spanish *Usted* which derives from *Vuestra Merced* ('Your Grace'). A parallel development is found in Portuguese *Você* from *Vossa Mercê* (Head 1978: 185).

If we construct a table of these examples, we can see that their etymologies resemble those of the Japanese forms:

Table 11: Pronouns from titles in selected languages

Possibly Dutch <i>u</i>	'your honour'
Spanish <i>usted</i>	'your grace'
Portuguese <i>ocê</i>	'your grace'

As the Japanese examples show, pronominalisation of titles is not limited to forms of address. Head (1978: 187) points out that a 'widespread means of showing respect to an addressee is to humble oneself in self-reference' by the use of terms such as 'slave' or 'servant' (as in Japanese *boku*). He cites this process in Persian, Khmer, Malay, Javanese, Sundanese, Thai, Burmese and Vietnamese.

Titles share a similarity with personal pronouns in that they designate not the individual as such but a *role* (or rank — relatively high or low — with social deixis). The earlier example above of a father and uncle may illustrate this: speaking with his child, the man is 'otôsan' or 'father'; speaking with his nephew or niece, he is 'ozisan' or 'uncle'; and perhaps at work he refers to himself as 'boku', while others call him 'katyô'. This role or rank reference may be one reason why we commonly find titles as more deferential pronoun substitutes, and in some cases grammaticalisation of titles to personal pronouns.

3rd person pronouns as forms of address deriving from title use

While the examples above show the development of pronouns from titles, a further development is where 3rd person pronouns are used as forms of address, deriving from the use of titles. As in the parliamentary quotation above, we can find ad hoc examples of this in English:

'Will **the Deputy Prime Minister** now give an undertaking to the House that **he** will intervene ...'

'Does **my right honourable friend** recognise that ... Does **he** also recognise the importance that ...'

And in fact, a century or so ago in English, in the dialects of the north, in Lancashire, Cheshire and in Suffolk *he* was often used for 'you'. In Suffolk it was used 'when the speaker wishes to be particularly respectful'; conversely, in Cheshire it was sometimes used by a superior to an inferior, and in the West Riding of Yorkshire it was only used when addressing children (Wright 1905: 274).

Head (1978: 167) reports use of 3rd person personal pronouns for reference to the addressee for a sample of languages around the world, including Amharic, Bemba, Kashmiri, Sotho, Tagalog and others.

In German, from the seventeenth century the 3rd person pronouns (*Er* and *sie*) were used, initially with titles such as *Herr* 'Sir' and *Frau* 'Madam' and then also independently. Subsequently, the 3rd person plural pronoun *Sie* (equivalent to English 'they') became the more polite or V form of address. This usage also spread to Danish and Norwegian (Bokmål) with

the 3rd person plural *De*. Some illustrative examples from German are given below:

Sprechen **Sie** Deutsch?

Do they [= you] speak German?

Wie geht es **Ihnen**? Gut, danke. Und **Ihnen**?

How goes it them-DAT [= you]? Good, thanks. And them-DAT [= you]?

'How are you? Fine, thanks, And you?'

Haben **Sie Ihren** Koffer schon gepackt?

Have they [= you] their [= your] suitcase already packed?

As has also happened in Japanese, for example with *kisama*, in German the earlier 3rd person singular *Er* 'he' became an insulting form of address 'von oben nach unten'. As the plural *Sie* 'they' became more general as a pronoun of address in the eighteenth century, so the singular *Er* lost value (Ljungerud 1979). Today, the 3rd person plural *Sie* 'they' is the normal polite or V form of address in German, although the social changes in the second half of the twentieth century also resulted in shifts in T-V pronoun usage. Such 'fluctuating social deixis' as illustrated here in German will be discussed further for English and Japanese in Howe (forthcoming b) on pronouns and politeness.

Loss of pronouns

Quirk et al. (1985: 335) define (English) pronouns as a 'varied class of closed-class words with nominal function', and Crystal (2008: 391) describes pronouns as a 'closed set of items which can be used to substitute for a noun phrase (or single noun)'. Following the discussions in this paper, we can state clearly that new pronouns can be and indeed have been added to this 'closed class' in English, and certainly in Japanese there have been many new pronoun forms.

And pronouns can also be lost from this class: as pointed out in Howe (2010), earlier English had several pronoun forms for number and case, only some of which survive. Counting nominative, accusative, dative and genitive case forms, and singular, dual and plural number, but excluding the many variants, one could state that Old English had around 36 personal pronouns (see e.g. the paradigms in Howe 1996: 131-133). Standard Modern English, by the same reckoning, has 19. This means that almost half of the personal pronouns found in Old English have been lost. For theoretical discussion of *why* these pronouns were lost, see Howe (1996).

Table 12: Pronouns lost in English

Nominative forms	
2nd p. plural/V	ye
3rd p. sing. fem.	hēo
3rd p. plural	hī

Accusative or dative forms	
1st p. sing. accusative	meç
2nd p. sing. accusative	ðeç
1st p. plural accusative	ūsiç
2nd p. plural accusative	ēowīç
3rd p. sing. masc. acc.	hine
3rd p. sing. fem. acc.	hī
3rd p. sing. neuter dat.	him
3rd p. plural acc.	hī

Genitive forms	
3rd p. sing. neuter	his

Dual forms	
1st person	wit-unc-uncer
2nd person	git-inç-inçer

T forms	
2nd person sing./T	thou-thee-thine, thy ¹¹

¹¹ Lost in most varieties of English.

Clearly, we should therefore rather state that the class of pronouns in many languages is comparatively *stable*, i.e. forms can be added or lost, but significantly less often than is the case for lexical or content words (see Howe 1996: 100-104, Quirk et al. 1985: 71-72).

Conclusions

This paper has looked very briefly at new pronouns and loss of pronouns in English, Japanese and other languages. Examining these types of developments can allow us to evaluate uncertain etymologies in the light of empirical evidence.

One obvious example is the origin of English *she*, which has been the subject of much discussion. It first appears as *scæ* in early Middle English in the Peterborough Chronicle and, by the end of the fourteenth century, is met to the exclusion of all other forms in the common literary language (Mossé 1952: 56). However, regionally in Middle English and indeed up to modern times several other forms of the 3rd p. sing. fem. nom. are common. For further details on *she* and dialect forms in Middle and Modern English, see Howe (1996: 145ff.).¹² Although there is not space to examine the origins of *she* here, the developments of new pronoun forms discussed in Howe (1996) and in this paper may offer support for some hypotheses and suggest that others are less likely.

A further application of such a study of attested developments of new pronoun forms is in evaluating the likelihood of various reconstructed

¹² Interested readers can listen to a speaker from Derbyshire using the form *hoo* 'she' in a dialect recording from the *Survey of English Dialects* on the British Library website www.bl.uk/learning/langlit/sounds/text-only/england/kniveton/.

preliterary developments. Without entering into a discussion of reconstruction here, the development of a compound to a new personal pronoun form — attested in for example *y'all* and in other languages discussed in this paper — is given as an etymology of the dual personal pronouns **wit* and **jit*, i.e. 'we' + 'two', 'ye' + 'two' (Old English *wit*, *git*) (see further Seebold 1984: 25-26). Here, then, we have in the attested personal pronouns in English and other languages examples of a process put forward for preliterary developments.

Howe (forthcoming a) will discuss reanalysis, an important factor in the often complex processes of pronoun loss.

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