On the Role of Indirect Personal Reference in the Development of Personal Pronouns

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Song, Kyung-An & Heine, Bernd. (2016). On the Role of Indirect Personal Reference in the Development of Personal Pronouns. *The Linguistic Association of Korea Journal 24*(1), 1-20. Based on an overview of a number of languages in different parts of the world, the paper argues that there is a widespread mechanism that accounts for some regularities in the development of markers of personal deixis. The mechanism includes (a) preference for indirect personal reference, (b) generalization and devaluation of highly valued expressions, and (c) the politeness principle. It has various implications for the structure of the languages concerned. It can be held responsible for the emergence of new grammatical forms and con- structions, for the loss of others, and for the fact that existing categories and systems of personal deixis are redefined. Another implication is that the mechanism can give rise to polysemous coding, in that the forms used for expressing functions involving indirect personal reference may serve simultaneously both in their old and their new functions.

Key Words: context manipulation, devaluation, indirect personal reference, personal pronoun, plurification, positioning, spatial deixis

1. Introduction

That there are cross-linguistic regularities in the evolution of personal pronouns has been argued in Heine & Song (2010; 2011) and Song (2011; 2012;

2013). These regularities relate on the one hand to the conceptual models that are recruited for creating new forms of personal deixis (Heine & Song, 2010), and on the other hand to the grammatical process characterizing this evolution (Heine & Song, 2011).

A major problem that surfaced in those works concerns the question of what induces people to change their behavior -- in other words: What are the motivations underlying grammatical change in general and personal deixis in particular? Some principles that are instrumental for approaching this problem were proposed in Song (2002; 2003; 2011; 2012; 2013), namely the following: (a) Preference for indirect personal reference,[1] (b) generalization and devaluation of highly valued expressions, and (c) the politeness principle. Building on those works, we will pursue this issue further by looking at a larger range of languages and data. Our main hypothesis is that among these principles it is most of all indirect personal reference that appears to be an important factor, while many other forces shaping speaker-hearer interaction are in some way or other derivative of it.

The main goal of the paper is to reconstruct some patterns of change in speaker-hearer interaction and the choice of pronominal address forms. Hence, the methodology used is diachronic in nature, restricted to comparative linguistic analysis. We will on the one hand draw on historically documented earlier linguistic situations; on the other hand, we will use the techniques of grammaticalization theory for proposing hypotheses on the evolution of personal pronouns (see e.g. Heine, Claudi & Hünnemeyer, 1991; Hopper & Traugott, 2003). In doing so, our interest is with expressions for speech participants, most of all with forms of personal address and second person pronouns.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 presents the framework to be used for the analysis of expressions for personal deixis, where we introduce concepts of speaker-hearer interaction that are relevant for the analysis that follows. Section 3 forms the main part of the paper, being devoted to the notion of indirect personal reference. Based on the observations made in Section 3, some conclusions are drawn in the final Section 4.

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1) Indirect personal reference is discussed in Song (2002; 2003) under the rubric of "indirect-ness". The latter term is avoided here because many of the uses that the term has received in the course of the last three decades are irrelevant here.

There are a couple of conventions that need to be mentioned for a better understanding of the discussions in the paper. The first concerns the terms "speaker" and "hearer", which will be used indiscriminately for the two basic participant roles in linguistic communication. They stand for a range of alternative notions used in other frameworks (e.g. sender vs. addressee), and they are also employed for modalities of communication other than speech, such as writing (reader vs. writer) or signing (signer vs. signee). Whenever necessary, however, we will make it clear which of these modalities is involved.

The second convention concerns a distinction between two types of pronominal address forms: When referring to data in some European languages we will distinguish two types of pronominal address, following the tradition established by Brown & Gilman (1968), a T-form (cf. Latin *tu* 'you, singular') and a V-form (cf. Latin *vos* 'you, plural'), French *tu* vs. *vous* being a paradigm example of this distinction.[2] The meaning of the two forms differs from one language to another; in general, the T-form tends to express solidarity, closeness and/or intimacy while the V-form is associated with power, distance, and asymmetric social relations.

2. Personal pronouns and positioning

The concern of the paper is with (independent) personal pronouns, that is, with items having the following properties: (a) They are words having their own prosody, (b) their primary or only function is to express distinctions of personal deixis, (c) they lack specific semantic content, (d) they resemble noun phrases in their positional possibilities but do not normally take modifiers, and (e) they form a closed class (cf. Sugamoto, 1989; Heath, 2004: 1002; Helmbrecht, 2005; see Heine & Song, 2011). Whether or not a given element conforms in every respect to this definition, however, is not a matter of major concern in this paper.

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2) In Helmbrecht's (2005: 424) sample of 59 European languages, only 16 have no honorific or politeness distinction in personal pronouns. Languages lacking the distinction are located either at Europe's periphery or outside Europe. The theoretical assumptions made by Brown & Gilman (1968) have not found general approval in subsequent sociolinguistic research (see e.g. Braun, 1988). This however is an issue that need not concern us here.

With few exceptions (see Heath, 2004: 999), languages are generally assumed to have personal pronouns of some kind, even if it is debatable whether the term appropriately describes the nature of personal deixis in some languages, in particular, those of Southeast and East Asia. We will treat personal pronouns as a sub-class of person markers, that is, linguistic elements that are shifters, specialized for this function and used for the expression of personal deixis (cf. Cysouw, 2003: 5).[3]

The boundaries between personal pronouns and other kinds of person markers are fluid (see Siewierska, 2004: xv). Most monographs on personal deixis also include person markers other than personal pronouns (e.g., Forchheimer, 1953; Head, 1978; Cysouw, 2003; Siewierska, 2004). The reason for our restriction is that extending the discussion to person markers in general would raise a number of issues that are beyond the subject matter of this paper.

We will assume that there is a nuclear social situation where two speech participants, a speaker and a hearer, interact in linguistic communication. We furthermore assume that personal pronouns constitute a system dedicated to the expression of personal deixis: In the most unmarked situation, the speaker would refer to herself with a first person pronoun ('I') and to the hearer with a second person pronoun ('you'). But there may be various alternative means available, and in order to find the most appropriate expression, the speaker has to position herself, where "positioning" means defining the social role relation between speaker and hearer.

In the context of an English-speaking community, positioning is usually not a major issue: Using *I* for the speaker and *you* for the hearer are the unmarked options in most situations. But in many other societies, the speaker must decide between two or more options for positioning by means of personal pronouns. Speakers of French or German, for instance, have to decide between two forms of second person address (a T-form and a V-form; see above), and speakers of Hungarian have five different options (Domonkosi, 2010).

In some societies of Southeast and East Asia, the number of options is even

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3) Person markers include a wide range of grammatical elements other than personal pronouns, such as bound markers, agreement markers, etc. In many languages of Southeast and East Asia, the status of both personal pronouns and person markers is controversial (see Cysouw, 2003: 12).

larger. Speakers of Thai have dozens of options; a male speaker must take into account, for example, that the personal pronoun *kuu'*('I') is appropriate when addressing another intimate male but should not be employed in the presence of women or children, and he may use the pronoun *ʔúa'*('I') when talking to lower class Chinese such as shopkeepers or waiters, but not to other persons (Cooke, 1965: 20-22)

A survey of the linguistic literature on personal deixis suggests that it is most of all the parameters listed in (1) that play a role in positioning. Positioning may be based on social status features associated with a given person, but it may also be based on the role relationship holding between participants in some specific social setting; cf. the distinction between person deixis and social deixis (Levinson, 1979: 207; 1983: 90; Domonkosi, 2010: 33).

(1) The main parameters of positioning
    a. Horizontal distance
    b. Vertical distance

What we refer to as horizontal distance concerns degrees of relative closeness of horizontal social relationship between participants of linguistic interaction. It has been described in other works most of all in terms of degrees of politeness or formality (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Haase, 1994). The degrees that are linguistically most relevant for pronominal address are the ones distinguished in the scale of (2).

(2) Degrees of horizontal distance: formal > neutral > informal

A distinction that usually correlates positively with this scale of horizontal distance is that between (a) people other than one's own group or people one is unfamiliar with (typically formal), (b) people of one's own group or neighborhood (typically neutral), and (c) people with whom one shares a close or intimate relationship, such as friends or relatives (typically informal). A variable that may cut across this distinction concerns the attitudes of the speaker, who may e.g. decide on personal grounds to use a form of horizontal distance that is at variance with what would be expected on the basis of

conventional social categorization (cf. the notion identity shift below).

Whereas horizontal distance is frequently described with reference to politeness, vertical distance is more likely to be associated with degrees of respect or social status.[4] It is the scale of social levels or ranks in (3) that is most relevant for our discussion.

(3) Degrees of vertical distance: higher > equal > lower

Variables associated with vertical distance can be ascribed features, like age and sex, or acquired features, such as social, political, religious, economic, or occupational status. Linguistic manifestations of vertical distance can be observed in role relations of all kinds, e.g. in the domain of the family (parents > child), of vocation (employer > employee), or of political power (ruler > subject).

In addition, there are various other factors that may determine positioning, in particular identity shift and pretended role asymmetry. With the term identity shift we refer to a strategy whereby the speaker may temporarily shift from her usual social role to some other role for specific purposes, using forms of personal deixis associated with that other role. Identity shift appears to be cross-linguistically fairly widespread, especially in the form of empathetic identity (Suzuki 1984), as e.g. in motherese(*Have we brushed our teeth today?*).[5] For example, in modern Tokyo, a young woman might say (4), coming up a small girl crying with no parent in sight, using first person instead of the expected second person reference.

(4) Japanese (Whitman, 1999: 366)
    Atasi   doo si-   ta   no?
    I (girl) how do- PERF   Q
    'What's wrong (little girl)?'

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4) We are using here the terms politeness and respect in a loose sense, considering the many different applications they have received (see e.g. Haase, 1994: 18).

5) Empathetic identity concerns a stance taken by the speaker to identify with another speech participant, thereby adopting, or pretending to adopt, the viewpoint of the latter (Suzuki 1984). More than in pronominal address, identity shift is crosslinguistically widely encountered in forms of nominal address, e.g. when a mother refers to her husband as 'father' or a husband to his mother-in-law as 'mother'.

While being apparently a ubiquitous phenomenon, we are not aware of any clear case where identity shift has given rise to new conventionalized forms of personal pronouns.6) Hence we will not have much to say about it in the remainder of this paper, which is concerned with diachronic manifestations of speaker-hearer dynamics.

The situation is different in the case of role asymmetry. This phenomenon was described in Heine & Song (2011) in terms of the asymmetric-role model of speaker-hearer interaction. It relates to the observation made in a number of societies that the speaker tends to understate his own social status, pretending to be of lower status while treating the hearer as a personality of higher status, deserving a respectful form of address. In a number of languages of Southeast and East Asia, this pretended role asymmetry is reflected in the grammaticalization of personal pronouns; the Japanese person pronoun *boku*('I') is historically derived from a noun for 'slave'7), whereas the pronoun *kimi*('you') can be traced back to a noun meaning 'emperor' or 'lord'. The Indonesian pronoun *saya* ('I') is historically a word for 'servant' while *tuan*('you') derives historically from a noun for 'master' (see Heine & Song, 2011; Song, 2011 for more examples and discussion). Like identity shift, role asymmetry is not of major concern for the subject matter discussed below; hence, we will not further deal with it in the remainder of the paper.

3. Indirect personal reference in pronominal address

Indirect personal reference (IPR) can be viewed as one of the manifestations of "indirectness", a term that has received a wide range of applications in fields such as literary analysis, conversation analysis, sociolinguistics, and pragmatics. In the present paper, we are restricted to a linguistic strategy recruited in the

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6) But see Whitman (1999) for an alternative view.
7) We are using the term "personal pronoun" here and elsewhere loosely when citing data from Japanese, but also from Korean. Whether, or to what extent the markers used for personal deixis in these languages really conform to our definition of "personal pronoun" in Section 2, must remain controversial (Sugamoto, 1989; see Cysouw, 2003: 28ff. for a discussion on this issue).

speaker-hearer interaction whereby a speaker uses a grammatical category for a purpose other than the one that category is originally dedicated to (cf., e.g., Sökeland 1980).[8]

IPR is neither an indispensible feature of conversational interaction (cf. Tsuda 1993), nor does it necessarily serve to convey unstated meaning (Tannen 1989: 23). For example, unstated meaning can be conveyed in many different ways which do not concern IPR, e.g., by means of circumlocution, metaphoric or metonymic expressions, etc. As we will argue below, IPR is a contributing factor not only in shaping speaker-hearer interaction but also in triggering grammatical change.

A grammatical form or construction can be said to be dedicated if it is used consistently for the expression of a specific meaning (or range of meanings). Thus, a definite article is assumed to be dedicated to the expression of definite reference, or a past tense construction to the expression of events or states in the past.

IPR typically involves potential face-threatening acts (Brown & Levinson, 1987); it has been proposed by Song (2002) to be a principle whereby a speaker aims at weakening or minimizing the effects that his or her message may have on interlocutors by using a linguistic expression that is minimally face threatening. While most instances of IPR in the use of personal deixis serve in one way or other to soften a threat to the hearer's face (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 207), a survey of the literature on this subject suggests that there is a range of other motivations that speakers may have, when drawing on IPR in personal address.[9]

In the use of personal pronouns for addressing the hearer there is a smaller range of linguistic devices, which can be further reduced to the catalog of linguistic features listed in (5) (cf. Song, 2002; 2003). Note that we are restricted here to pronominal forms of address; other linguistic devices, such as nominal

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8) An anonymous reviewer of an earlier version this paper observes that the authors do not demonstrate how their understanding of indirectness situates itself with reference to the many different uses that the term has received in the field. We nevertheless hope that the definition proposed here is of help in accounting for salient characteristics of grammatical evolution to be discussed in the remainder of the paper.

9) An analysis of these motivations is beyond the scope of this paper and needs much further research.

forms of address and grammatical constructions, are beyond the scope of this paper (but see Haase, 1994 for detailed discussion).

> (5) Linguistic strategies used for coding IPR in pronominal singular address
> a. **Plurification:** Use a plural pronoun instead of the expected singular form
> b. **Spatial deixis:** Use a concept of spatial deixis to express personal deixis
> c. **Non-deixis:** Use a concept that has no deictic value (i.e. does not refer to direct participants)
> d. **Zero:** Don't use any form at all.

The extent to which IPR is employed differs greatly from one society to another. It is arguably most discriminative in societies of East and Southeast Asia, whereas in most parts of Africa it is clearly less important.[10] Most commonly, expressing distinctions of IPR is prescribed by social conventions based on the parameters of horizontal and/or vertical distance (see (1)). But in all societies that are well documented it is also a matter of personal choice, at least to some extent (see e.g. identity shift, Section 2.). (5a) and (5b) are suggestive of a metonymic conceptualization where a referent or addressee is understood to be a member of a more general unit, which is a corporate group in (5a) and a spatial entity in (5b) (cf. Brown & Levinson, 1987: 199). We will now look at each of the strategies in turn (see Heine & Song, 2010, 2011 for further examples).

Plurification[11]: Presumably, this is cross-linguistically the one most frequently employed; examples have been reported from all major parts of the world,

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10) According to Matalene (1985: 801), to be indirect in written discourse, to expect the audience to infer meanings rather than to have them spelled out is a defining characteristic of Chinese rhetoric, and Kim (2009: 2092) suggests that the presence of indirectness in Korea, China and Japan can be linked to the Confucian essence of social harmony in the community.

11) This term, proposed by Heine & Song (2011), replaces the term "pluralization" used in Heine & Song (2010) because the latter is also used in a number of other ways that do not relate to pronominal address.

even if it is rarely found in the languages of the Americas (Head, 1978: 158; Brown & Levinson, 1987: 198-200; Siewierska, 2004: 216-221).

According to this strategy, the speaker uses a singular pronoun for directness but a plural pronoun for IPR, where the latter can relate to a number of different motivations (Brown & Levinson 1987: 198-9). In the Austronesian language Malagasy, for example, plurification has been reported to be used on the one hand to embed a referent in one's group; on the other hand, it may be a strategy for avoiding to single out the referent (Keenan 1974: 69-74). As a diachronic process, plurification can lead to the conventionalization of a plural pronoun to address single persons to express distinctions of horizontal and/or vertical distance.[12]

In exceptional cases, plurification may also concern first person referents, in that the speaker uses a first person plural form for first person singular reference. In the Latin of antiquity there was only the singular pronoun *tu* ('you'). The Roman emperor sometimes spoke of himself as *nos*('we'), and he was addressed by means of the plural pronoun *vos*('you, plural'). In a similar fashion, the last emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Sellasie, spoke of himself as *əɲɲa* ('we') (Zelealem Leyew; p.c.). In Cambodia, the first person plural pronoun *jeuːng*('we') of Khmer also serves for the royal first person singular 'I' (John Haiman, p.c.). And in Thailand, the first person plural pronoun *raw'*('we, us, our'), serves as a singular form employed by the king to speak to subjects in public address, also used more generally by a superior to an inferior (Cooke 1965: 25).

Spatial deixis: Another cross-linguistically widespread strategy to achieve IPR is to code the speaker-hearer relation in terms spatial concepts. This strategy entails typically that the speaker is conceptualized as being at the deictic center ('this (person)', 'here') and the hearer as being at some distance from the deictic center ('that (person)', 'there'; see Heine & Song, 2010). The linguistic categories employed consists almost invariably of expressions for demonstrative or adverbial deixis.

Thus, in Japanese the spatial deictics provide weakly grammaticalized person

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12) Navaho has been reported to use a dual rather than a plural form to express degrees of respect or social distance (Head, 1978: 158).

markers: The demonstrative pronouns *kochira* (close to speaker), *sochira* (close to hearer), and *achira* (close to neither) can be used to refer to the first, second and third person respectively, as the examples in (6) show.

(6) Japanese (Yamamoto, 2006: 112)
    a. **Kochira**   wa   Yamamoto   desu.
        this.side   TOP   Yamamoto   COP
        'This is (I am) Yamamoto.'

    b. **Sochira**-san   no   go- tsugo   shidai   desu.
        that.side-HON   GEN   HON-convenience   up.to   COP
        'It depends on your convenience.'

In some languages, this stragegy of drawing on spatial deictic categories for referring to or addressing the hearer has given rise to fully grammaticalized second person pronouns. The second person pronoun *anata*('you') of Japanese originates in a spatial deictic noun signaling roughly 'over there' or 'that side' in Late Old Japanese. It was first used as a third person marker ('person over there') in Early Modern Japanese, subsequently being extended and specialized as a second person pronoun around 1750 (Traugott & Dasher, 2002: 230).

Beyond the modalities of spoken and written language it is most of all in sign languages that the deictic space has been recruited as a conceptual template for structuring personal deixis: Pointing gestures (and eye gaze) provide a convenient source for concepts of both spatial and personal deixis (see Pfau & Steinbach, 2006; 2011).

Non-deixis: There are four main strategies for coding IPR in pronominal address by means of non-deictic expressions, namely the following:

(7) a. use a nominal form,
    b. use a third person pronoun,[13]

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13) Whether or not third person reference or pronouns should be classified as deictic is discussed controversially. We are here following Benveniste (1966) in treating it as non-deictic.

     c. use an indefinite pronoun, or

     d. use an identity marker, i.e. a reflexive, intensifier or identity pronoun.[14]

As we will see below, all strategies are attested and have given rise to new categories of personal pronouns (Heine & Song, 2010; 2011). (7a) concerns nominal address forms whose use is extended and subsequently grammaticalized, giving rise to new second person pronouns (Heine & Song, 2011). The history of European languages abounds with examples of this process. Spanish *Vuestra Merced* and Portuguese *Vossa Mercê*, both meaning 'Your Grace', were grammaticalized to polite second person pronouns *Usted* and *Você*, respectively. Italian *La Vostra Signoria*('Your Lordship') gave rise to the second person pronoun *Lei*. Romanian *Domnia Ta*('Your Grace') was grammaticalized to the second person address form *dumneata* (also: *Domnia Voastră*, 'Your (PL) Grace' > *dumneavoastră*). Dutch *Uwe Edelheid*('Your Nobility') developed into the second person polite form *U* (see Head, 1978: 185; Siewierska, 2004: 224; Merlan, 2006: 222-226; Song, 2012).

Strategy (7a) is cross-linguistically highly common and has given rise to a number of personal pronouns. We saw a couple of examples from Indonesian and Japanese in Section 2. Shibatani (1990: 371-372) says that most Japanese personal pronouns derived etymologically from regular nouns[15] (for more examples, see Heine & Song, 2010; 2011; Song, 2011).

That the use of a third person pronoun is extended to mark second person address has been documented in a number of languages. As was observed already above, the Japanese second person pronoun *anata*('you') (originally a noun for spatial deixis in Late Old Japanese) was a third person marker ('person over there') in Early Modern Japanese before it underwent a shift from third to second person pronoun around 1750 (Traugott & Dasher, 2002: 230).

Strategy (7c), that is, extending the use of an indefinite or impersonal pronoun is cross-linguistically a common way of signaling IPR (Brown &

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14) Under the term "identifier", three kinds of pronominal concepts are subsumed, namely reflexives (e.g. *Paul killed **himself***), intensifiers (*John **himself** killed her*), and identity pronouns (*They are **the same**.*). See Heine & Song (2010) for reasons to group these three together.

15) See also Park (1996) and Lee (2004) for more nominal expressions used for personal deixis in Japanese.

Levinson, 1987: 197-198; Kitagawa & Lehrer, 1990). We may say (8a) instead of saying (8b).

(8) English (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 197)
   a. **One** *shouldn't do things like that.*
   b. *You shouldn't do things like that.*

To our knowedge, this kind of extension does not normally give rise to conventionalized forms of pronominal address and, hence, is not dealt with in this paper. But it may lead to the grammaticalization of first person plural deixis. A paradigm example is provided by the French impersonal pronoun *on* ('one') which historically derived from the Latin noun *homo*('person, man'). It developed into a first person plural pronoun 'we' in colloquial French, competing with the inherited pronoun *nous*('we') (Blanch-Benveniste, 1985; Coveney, 2000; cf. (9)).

(9) Modern Colloquial French (Coveney, 2000: 459)
   C'est   nous   qu'   **on**   est   les   vainqueurs.
   that.is we   who   we   is   the.PL   winners
   'It is us who's the winners.'

The result of applying strategy (7d) is that the use of an identity pronoun ('the same') or reflexive('self') is grammaticalized as a pronominal address form. For example, in the mid 18th century, the German identity pronoun *dieselben*('the same ones') developed into an anaphoric marker of the highest level of honorification, i.e. of vertical distance (Simon, 1997: 274-275; cf. (10)).

(10) 18th century German (Simon, 2003)
   Ich   bitte   dieselben.
   I   ask   the.same.ones
   'I ask you.' (Maximally polite form of address)

Zero forms: This strategy can be described as an avoidance strategy (cf. Brown & Levinson, 1987: 190-204). It is found especially in societies that

dispose of several pronominal address forms where each is associated with specific values of horizontal and vertical distance. In such societies, the availability of a zero category is a convenient tool that enables the speaker to avoid making social mistakes by drawing on the zero category, which is unmarked for horizontal and vertical distance and other factors (see Brown & Levinson, 1987: 197-198 for an example from Tamil).

Hungarian has such a category. Called a "zero pronoun" that triggers third person agreement, it constitutes one of the five pronominal address forms of the language, classified as a V-form by Domonkosi (2010: 34, 39-40). It tends to be picked as an unmarked alternative in particular when the speaker is stuck with having to decide on which of the second person V-pronouns, *ön* or *maga*, is appropriate in a given situation. For example, when interviewed during a sociolinguistic survey on personal deixis in Hungary, one of the informants commented on her use of the zero form thus: "I never address anyone with *maga*, because *maga* is kind of so plebeian, kind of coarse. Somehow it feels uncouth. And then *ön* feels too genteel to me. So I flounder along between the two, without using either word." (Domonkosi, 2010: 39).

Obviously, the zero strategy is employed most commonly in "pro-drop languages", where pronouns can be omitted, especially when their meaning can be inferred from the context.[16] And it is particularly important in languages that confront the speaker with rich inventories of pronominal address forms where each option is associated with specific distinctions of horizontal and vertical distance (see (2), (3) above). Thai is such a language; it has one of the most complex systems of address forms in the world.[17] Cooke (1968: 63) reports some cases of this kind in Thai. For example, a young, democratically minded Thai man decides to avoid pronouns altogether in addressing an elderly pedlar since none of the many that exist can be reconciled with the complex requirements of social deixis, and he adds the following case:

A young woman wishes to address a man of about her own age that she

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16) Shibatani (1990: 390-391) calls Japanese a zero-pronoun language: "Where many other languages may have pronouns, Japanese simply uses no overt expression."
17) The status of both personal pronouns and person markers is discussed controversially. Cysouw (2003: 12), for example, says that there are no "real" person markers in Thai.

has just met, or one who is a rather casual acquaintance. Among the possible first person forms, /dichan/ is too deferential; /chan/ on the other hand is not deferential enough – particularly for young women of the rising generation who tend not to use /chan/ as a neutral or more general term; and even the nickname may appear a little too informal or intimate in such a situation. It therefore turns out that, for some speakers, there is no term that is completely acceptable. A woman in this situation therefore attempts to avoid using any first person form at all. (Cooke, 1968: 63)

In Japanese, the zero strategy is particularly important when vertical distance is concerned. While all the existing second person pronouns are usable by a person addressing a social equal or inferior, none of them is quite appropriate when addressing a person of socially higher status, and Shibatani (1990: 372) adds that this is "one of the factors contributing to the wide distribution of the zero pronoun".

4. Conclusions

For good reasons, personal pronouns, and personal deixis in general, are widely held to belong to the most conservative and stable components of language structure. In many language families, markers for personal deixis can be traced back to the earliest states of reconstructed history. As the present paper may have shown, however, even a domain such as personal deixis is not immune to changes and restructuring, and such changes can be accounted for at least to some extent with reference to the dynamics characterizing speaker-hearer interaction.

The strategies distinguished in this paper do not exhaust the entire range of linguistic means employed for indirect personal reference (see Heine & Song, 2010; 2011 for additional means), but they account for the vast majority of processes in the languages of the world. The strategies are by no means mutually exclusive; rather, they can be jointly involved in the creation of new personal pronouns. In the development of the German third person plural

pronoun *sie*('they') to the pronominal address form *Sie*('you'; singular or plural) in the 18th century, the process involved simultaneously a shift from plural to singular and from non-deixis to personal deixis (Simon, 2003: 121). And the strategies can also be recruited sequentially, one after the other. We had one example earlier in this section: The development of the Japanese second person pronoun *anata*('you') was shaped first by a process from spatial deixis to third person pronoun ('that side' > 'he, she') and subsequently to second person deixis ('he, she' > 'you').

The general motivation underlying the changes discussed in this paper can be seen in human activity aimed at finding optimal ways of saying what is both socially appropriate and most advantageous for the speaker in a given socio-linguistic context. This motivation induces speakers to present the participants of a communicative act in a specific way. In some situations it may be desirable to avoid addressing the speaker directly; consequently, the speaker is likely to use rhetorical strategies that are conceived to be instrumental to responding to such situations.

It goes without saying that the present paper is severely limited in its scope to the methodology that the study of grammaticalization offers. More socio-linguistic and psycholinguistic research is needed both to determine the whole range of factors shaping indirect personal reference and the way it shapes grammatical change, and to further test the hypotheses presented in this paper.

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