

What the Japanese Language Tells Us about the Alleged Japanese Relational Self

Yoko Hasegawa and Yukio Hirose
University of California, Berkeley and University of Tsukuba

ABSTRACT

The Japanese have frequently been characterized as “collectivistic” and “group-oriented.” This common view is based on the group model of Japanese society, which claims that the Japanese self is relational, fluid, and assimilated into one’s in-group as a collective deictic center. Reviewing several major works that cover Japanese society and its language, the present article argues that the collectivist view of the Japanese self is incompatible with essential features of the Japanese language. Through an examination of addressing and kinship terms, honorific and polite expressions, donatory verbs, psychological predicates, the pronoun *jibun*, and private (as opposed to public) expressions, it is demonstrated that (i) Japanese requires a notion of an absolute self that is strictly distinct from others and cannot be assimilated into one’s in-group, and (ii) the distinction of the two aspects of the speaker, public and private self, is crucial to the analysis of the Japanese self. The group model pays attention only to public expressions involving social and interpersonal relations; in order to identify the essential nature of the Japanese and their language, an examination of private expressions is mandatory. The image of Japanese people that emerges from this study is contrary to the group model depiction: they are individualistic beings with strong inner self-consciousness. (Key words: Japanese self, collectivism, group model, in-group/out-group, psych predicate, public/private)

1. INTRODUCTION

Japanese society has frequently been characterized as extremely *collectivistic* or *group-oriented*.¹ From this widely accepted view, there follows another often-quoted characterization, namely, that the Japanese have little sense of individual identity. The notion of Japanese self is said to be relational and context-dependent, rather than a fixed reference point residing within each individual — the conception called *contextualism*. This collectivistic view has long been prevalent in studies on Japan and of the Japanese in anthropology, ethnography, psychoanalysis, psychology, and sociology.² The same is true in studies of the Japanese language: many of its

¹ This article is an integration and development of the ideas discussed in Hasegawa (1998, 1999a) and Hirose (1995, 1997, 2000). Our purpose is not to further develop Hasegawa’s investigation of Japanese individualism or Hirose’s investigation of Japanese self *individually*. Rather, the aim is to integrate these seemingly unrelated works to shed light on the study of Japanese society and language. We are greatly indebted to Wesley Leonard, Naoaki Wada, and three anonymous reviewers for their comments and suggestions to improve this article.

² Such studies are collectively referred to as the *nihonjinron* ‘study of Japanese (uniqueness)’. *Nihonjinron* emerged during the late 19th century and flourished periodically, frequently coincided with major social disruptions, e.g. the SinoJapanese War (1894-95), the RussoJapanese War (1904-05), World War I (1914-18), World War II (1939-45), etc. (Minami 1994:2). The *nihonjinron* as a genre was established in the 1930s (Mouer & Sugimoto 1986), and it has enjoyed enormous popularity in recent years. The *nihonjinron* genre is expansive; the writers include not only academics but also journalists, critics, novel writers, and business elites (Yoshino

features are commonly accounted for in terms of *collectivism* or *groupism* (e.g. Bachnik 1982, Wetzel 1984, Kondo 1990, Bachnik & Quinn 1994, Makino 1995, 1996).

Only recently have researchers begun to question and criticize this belief in Japanese collectivism (e.g. Befu 1980, 1987, Hamaguchi 1985, 1996, Dale 1986, Mouer & Sugimoto 1986, Sugimoto & Mouer 1989, 1995, Iwabuchi 1994, Takano & Osaka 1997, 1999, Osaka 2000). For example, examining major experimental studies in psychology, Takano & Osaka (1999) conclude that, other than anecdotal reportage, there is no evidence to support the claim that the Japanese are more collectivistic than Americans.

The alleged Japanese collectivism could well be a myth. The present study investigates this controversial issue from a linguistic perspective and demonstrates that the collectivistic model is incompatible with essential features of the Japanese language. Although various linguistic phenomena in Japanese suggest group orientation, underlying them is a linguistic system deeply rooted in the existence of the individualistic self.

The organization of this article is as follows. Section 2 provides a brief discussion of general relationships between language and social models. It then outlines the group model of Japanese society, calling attention to the notion of relational self as one that is fluid and situationally defined and identifying the linguistic phenomena motivating this model. Section 3 critically examines the notion of relational self, which is assumed to be assimilated into the in-group, or *uchi*, as a collective deictic center, by considering sentences that involve *psychological* (or *psych*) *predicates*. Consideration of such sentences reveals that Japanese requires a notion of *absolute self*. That absolute self is the one whose mental states the speaker can directly access, which is none other than the speaker as the center of subjectivity, a concept applicable to all languages. Section 4 demonstrates that universally there are two distinct aspects to the speaker's concept of self. One is the *public self* as the subject of communicating; the other is the *private self* as the subject of thinking or consciousness. The public self is a social being whose intent is to interact with others, whereas the private self is an individual being with no such intention. We contend that while the English language focuses on the public self, the Japanese language focuses on the private self. In terms of the notion of the private self as the "naked" self, section 5 extends our analysis. The existence of various words of self-reference in Japanese does not prove the context-dependence of one's individual self as such, but merely of the "clothes" it wears in public. The image of Japanese people that emerges from our linguistic study is that, contrary to what is depicted by the group model, Japanese speakers are aware of themselves as individual beings, each with a strong inner self-consciousness.

2. THE GROUP MODEL AND THE FLUIDITY OF THE JAPANESE SELF

2.1. Language and social models

Many researchers have recognized that certain linguistic subsystems of a given language cannot be accounted for without recourse to the social organizations of the speech community, e.g. addressing and kinship terms, and honorific expressions. Anthropologists, ethnographers, and sociologists propose a social model, and they commonly use linguistic subsystems to support their arguments. Linguists, in turn, use such a model to explicate various linguistic phenomena.

1992:9). According to a survey by Nomura Research Institute, at least 700 nihonjinron books were published between 1945 and 1978 (Dale 1986:15). The Japanese might be quite unique for their eagerness of discussing their uniqueness. See also Aoki (1999) for a discussion of the major history and criticism of nihonjinron.

Thus, a mutual dependency exists between sociological/anthropological and linguistic investigations. Japanese is one of the languages that have been extensively investigated in this respect.

Because social models are usually constructed, explicitly or implicitly, in behalf of a particular issue with a particular readership in mind — e.g. in the case of Japanese, to plan the Allied Occupation of post-War Japan, to explain Japan's rapid economic growth of the 1960s, to solve US-Japan trade imbalances of the 1980s — the adequacy of each model is relative to the objectives and timing of the investigation. It is therefore theoretically justifiable for social researchers to use linguistic data *selectively* to meet their needs. Models are ideological in nature: ideal but of visionary speculation. Various characteristics are frequently abstracted out to create a monolithic and coherent model. Therefore, when a model is applied to unintended areas, this selectivity of linguistic data can lead to a distorted view of the speech community. This, in fact, appears to be the case with the Japanese language.

As mentioned above, Japanese society has often been characterized in terms of collectivism/groupism and contextualism. The next subsection summarizes some major works representing such views.

2.2. Collectivism/Groupism

Collectivism/Groupism vis-à-vis individualism refers to such characteristics as “the individual's identification with and immersion into the group, conformity and loyalty to group causes, selfless orientation towards group goals, and consensus and the lack of conflict among group members” (Yoshino 1992:19). The Japanese are said to be “extremely sensitive to and concerned about social interaction and relationships” (Lebra 1976:2). “Even in intimate groups there are strong pressures to conformity, which many have seen as the source of the deepest psychological malaise in Japanese society” (Smith 1983:56). To provide an anecdotal example of Japanese group consciousness, Nakane (1970:2-3) points out that the Japanese commonly introduce themselves with their affiliation, rather than with their personal attributes. For example, a Japanese person is more likely to say “I'm from X University” or “I belong to Y Company” than “I'm a psychologist” or “I'm a software engineer.”³

Publication of Ruth Benedict's 1946 book, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, led to Japanese society often being characterized as *hierarchical*. This involves vertical stratification by an institution or group of institutions, rather than horizontal stratification by class or caste, and each group is vertically organized based on the relationships between paternalistic superiors and their subordinates (Nakane 1970).

³ This generalization on Japanese preference of group over individual attribute neglects the crucial aspect of self-introduction; one selects introductory statements according to the presumed knowledge of the addressee and the purpose of the subsequent conversations. Usually a Japanese introduces him-/herself in the way Nakane describes when it is already known that the speaker is a scholar or a company employee. Only then, does stating one's affiliation become natural and relevant. (Because being a company employee is a default in modern urban Japan, the phenomenon mentioned by Nakane is commonly observed.) It sounds strange, however, to say ‘I'm from XYZ University’ unless the addressee already knows that the speaker is a college student or professor or somehow affiliated with a university.

Smith (1983:82) reports that many Japanese men have two different cards, a business card that includes rank in his organization, business address, and telephone number, and a personal card that bears only his name, home address and telephone number. The latter is said to be given out only to those in the closed circle of one's acquaintances. This episode indicates that one's affiliation is not an automatic part of identification.

Such a society assumes loyalty from below and benevolence from above. Underlying this vertical society is said to be the Japanese societal trait called *amae* ‘dependence/indulgence’ (Doi 1973). *Amae* consists of “the feelings that normal infants at the breast harbor toward the mother — dependence, the desire to be passively loved, the unwillingness to be separated from the warm mother-child circle and cast into a world of objective ‘reality’” (Bester 1973:7). This attitude of dependence is reportedly carried into adulthood, and dependence on others’ benevolence is encouraged during the socialization processes of the Japanese (DeVos 1985:165). This type of dependency is considered to occur in group settings: subordinates, who play the child role, can seek dependence on their superior, and the superior, who plays the parent role, is expected to display benevolence (Yoshino 1992:18).⁴

2.3. *Uchi and Soto*

Closely linked to Japanese group orientation is the notion of *uchi*. The translational approximation of *uchi* is ‘inside’, but *uchi* can be used to refer to the speaker’s own home, house, or household. *Uchi* is also commonly associated with ‘in-group’ or ‘insider(s)’. *Uchi* and its antonym *soto* ‘outside/out-group/outsider’ are said to constitute “a major organizational focus for Japanese self, social life, and language” (Bachnik 1994:3), and without these concepts, much of Japanese behavior is said to be “inexplicable (at least from a Western perspective)” (Wetzel 1994:74). *Uchi* and *soto* are also key terms in the connection of groupism and contextualism — the latter concerning the notion of Japanese self.

Characterized as relational and social, the Japanese self is claimed to be “situationally defined” (Araki 1973, Hamaguchi 1985). Advocates of this view contend that in Japan, relationships between individuals are prioritized over the individual self — which is more central to the Western notion of self (Bachnik 1994:18), and that “the identification of self and other is always indeterminate in the sense that there is no fixed center from which, in effect, the individual asserts a noncontingent existence” (Smith 1983:81). Furthermore, “proper use of Japanese teaches one that a human being is always and inevitably involved in a multiplicity of social relationships. Boundaries between self and other are fluid and constantly changing, depending on context and on the social positioning people adopt in particular situations” (Kondo 1990:31).

2.4. The notion of self

To recapitulate, compared with the Western notion of self, the Japanese self is claimed by many researchers to be unstable, constantly shifting, and context dependent. It is imperative to consider here what the term *self* signifies in general as well as the term *Western self* in particular. Most of the works we consulted use Western self as a reference point with which Japanese self is compared and explained, but it is difficult to find detailed discussions of the Western self in these works. It became apparent, however, that it is impossible to define *self* independently of the objectives of the investigation.⁵ Because the objective of this article is to scrutinize the above claim concerning the Japanese self, the definition to be employed must be capable of

⁴ The concept of *amae* is not restricted to subordinates directing toward their superiors; a superior can also practice *amae* to a subordinate. *Ja (okotoba ni) amaete* ‘Lit. Well then, indulging myself on your kind words’ is a common phrase to use when one accepts an offer, regardless of one’s relative status in the hierarchy.

⁵ In this connection, Wierzbicka (1993) and Haiman (1995) argue from a cross-linguistic perspective that the concept of ‘self’ as such is not a universal primitive lexically embodied in all languages.

differentiating the Western and Japanese self notions. We will, therefore, present several definitions and select the one that can best serve our purpose.

In his article, “The self and social behavior in differing cultural contexts,” Triandis (1989:506) defines the self as consisting

“of all statements made by a person, overtly or covertly, that include the words ‘I,’ ‘me,’ ‘mine,’ and ‘myself’ ... This broad definition indicates that all aspects of social motivation are linked to the self. Attributes (e.g., *I like X*), beliefs (e.g., *I think that X results in Y*), intentions (e.g., *I plan to do X*), norms (e.g., in *my* group, people should act this way), roles (e.g., in *my* family, father acts this way), and values (e.g., *I think equality is very important*) are aspects of the self.”

This broad definition is inappropriate for our purpose here because it trivializes the claim that the Japanese self is unstable, constantly shifting, and context dependent. If we define the self in such a way, *all* selves are unstable, constantly shifting, and context dependent.⁶

Another definition worth considering, although not particularly useful for our purpose, is found in Rosenberger (1992:67):

“Through relationship and language, self originates and develops by means of its socio-cultural world. Emotionally invested in its world through action and language, self reconstitutes that world, albeit with various personal reinterpretations. Self is born and reborn through positioning in various sets of cultural ideas and practice. In short, self is not transcendental with an ultimate meaning within itself. Self’s meaning derives from its position in relation to other meanings — meanings of other selves, other relationships, other groups, and so on — and from its movement among these positions.”

In this assertion, contrary to what the author states, the existence of the self or the self’s meaning independently of other meanings appears to be presupposed, because otherwise it cannot have a position in relation to other meanings. Rosenberger (1992:90) maintains that the American self is individualized, whereas the Japanese self is interconnected. It is unclear how such a distinction can be made while employing this definition.

Regarding a universal definition of self, Lebra (1992:105) points out that the most essential feature of self is *self-awareness*, which is “generated and fostered through self-other interaction on the one hand and the symbolic processing of information on the other.” She contends that because self-awareness as a universal feature of self is a product of social participation and cultural representation, “the quality and content of self-awareness as well as the boundary condition of self are destined to vary from one social-cultural group to the next” (ibid.). She proposes an organization of such variability of self into three dimensions: the interactional (outer) self, the inner self, and the boundless self. It is important to note that she does not consider that each individual possesses three distinct selves, and that her uses of those terms are merely abbreviations of the interactional layer of self, the inner layer of self, and the boundless layer of self, respectively.

⁶ Another problem of Triandis’ definition is its bases on the literal use of personal pronouns; as we discuss later, the Japanese translational equivalents of personal pronouns have some fundamental differences from their English counterparts.

The interactional layer of self is said by Lebra to have two polar orientations: the presentational (layer of) self and the empathetic (layer of) self. “The presentational self involves the surface layer of self, metaphorically localized on the person’s face, visible or exposed to others either in actuality or imagination” (106). The empathetic layer is “the awareness of self as an insider of a group or network, or as a partner to a relationship” (108). The interactional layer is precarious, vulnerable, relative — unfixed in its nature. The inner layer of self is something like ‘I’, which is more stable than the interactional layer and immune from social relativity. “At the center of the inner self is the *kokoro* which stands for heart, sentiment, spirit, will, or mind. While the outer self is socially circumscribed, the *kokoro* can be free, spontaneous, and even asocial. Further, the *kokoro* claims moral superiority over the outer self in that it is a reservoir of truthfulness and purity, uncontaminated by circumspections and contrivances to which the outer self is subject” (112). The boundless layer of self is free from the subject-object differentiation, disengaged from the world of dichotomies between self and other, inner and outer realms, existence and non-existence, life and death, and so on — an idea embedded in the Buddhist version of transcendentalism.

Lebra contends that these dimensions are not mutually exclusive but “partially overlapping layers of self which are activated as alternative strategies for self-orientations and reorientations” (116). And she speculates that “the three dimensions can be aligned in a value hierarchy. The interactional [outer] self as the lowest, the boundless self as the highest, the inner self in the middle” (117).

Insightful as it is, her characterization of self cannot be employed to evaluate the claim that the Japanese self is somewhat different from the Western self. She acknowledges that such a claim is valid only when the outer layer of self is considered. However, in order to compare and contrast Japanese and Western selves, we need an analysis of Western self that uses the same layered framework — an analysis that is, to our knowledge, unavailable.

We are inclined to consider that the self is *not* what ‘I’ in ‘Who am I?’ refers to, but, rather, the one who asks this question. This notion of self is what Deikman (1996) calls *awareness*. He claims that awareness, which is equivalent to his term for ‘I’, is different from the self: the former is the core of subjectivity, whereas, in his theory, the self is formed by mental contents.⁷ It is his notion of awareness that equates with our idea of what the self is.

To summarize Deikman’s theory of ‘I’ (= awareness), the ‘I’ is the observer, the experiencer, and precedes all conscious content, e.g. thoughts, emotions, images, sensations, desires and memory. Awareness cannot itself be observed because it is not an object. Awareness is different from all that of which we are aware, for it is the ground in which the mind’s contents manifest themselves. The contents appear in awareness and then disappear. One knows awareness by being it (thus solving the problem of the infinite regress of observers). Although awareness may vary in intensity as our total state changes, it is usually constant. This characterization is hardly culture specific, but later in this article it can provide an epistemological basis for our linguistic discussion of the self.

Although we are still unable to present a general definition of ‘self’, we have come to the conclusion that the most appropriate definition of ‘Western self’ equates with the Cartesian

⁷ Lakoff and Johnson (1999) make a similar distinction. For what Deikman calls *awareness*, they use the term *Subject*, defined as “the locus of consciousness, subjective experience, reason, will, and our ‘essence,’ everything that makes us who we uniquely are” (1999:268). They consider that “there is at least one Self and possibly more. The Selves consist of everything else about us — our bodies, our social roles, our histories, and so on” (ibid.).

notion of self: “I am transparent to myself: My self-knowledge is mediated neither by inference nor by any teleological element such as a passing purpose or project. I know my own identity directly and completely, whereas others know it only inferentially and relative to certain sets of purposes” (Boër & Lycan 1986:139). This definition conforms with Geertz’s (1976:225) often quoted comment:

“The Western conception of the person as a bounded, unique, more or less integrated motivational and cognitive universe, a dynamic center of awareness, emotion, judgment and action organized into a distinctive whole and set contrastively both against other such wholes and against its social and natural background, is, however incorrigible it may seem to us, a rather peculiar idea within the context of the world’s cultures.”

In the balance of this article, the term ‘Western self’ should be understood in such a sense.

2.5. Linguistic evidence for the group model

The group model with fluidity of self is customarily utilized to account for linguistic phenomena in Japanese, most notably for pronouns, addressing and kinship terms, extended use of donatory verbs, and the polite/honorific systems.

It is claimed by advocates of the group model that Japanese lacks the exact equivalent of ‘I’ which would serve as the fixed point of self. In addressing a child, an adult male is likely to refer to himself as *ojisan* ‘uncle’, and a schoolteacher calls him-/herself *sensei* ‘teacher’ (cf. Suzuki 1973, 1984).⁸ “A multiple and variable self like this ultimately boils down to “non-self” as symbolized by the zero form [the Japanese speaker tends not to use any overt linguistic expression to refer to him-/herself]” (Lebra 1992:111).

Regarding kinship terms, the unmarked choice for the word corresponding to ‘mother’ is *okaasan*. It can be used to refer to the mother of the addressee as well as of a third-person. It can also be used for the speaker’s own mother in a conversation with in-group members or in informal conversations with outsiders. In formal conversations, however, another word, *haha*, must be employed, rather than *okaasan*, to refer to one’s own mother. The same distinction is made for father, grandparents, siblings, and other close relatives. This demonstrates that an appropriate choice of kinship terms depends on context — whether or not the addressee is an insider (i.e. a member of *uchi*) — and the formality of the conversation.

An example to illustrate the fluidity of the boundaries between self and others is drawn from the usage of *donatory* verbs. There are two kinds of verbs in Japanese that correspond to the English verb ‘give’: *kure-* and *age-*. With *kure-*, the inherent destination of the transfer is the speaker, i.e. the self. For example, to indicate that Okada lent money to you, you would say:⁹

⁸ The use of kin terms for self-reference is widespread worldwide: for example, an American mother would say to her child “Please wait for a minute. Mommy’s on the phone now.” Wesley Leonard pointed out to us, however, that such a use of kin terms is reserved for young children in the United States, whereas in Japan it is appropriate even when one is speaking to grown-ups. Using an occupational title to refer to oneself is less commonly observed in the world’s languages.

⁹ The following abbreviations are used in the glosses of example sentences: ACC = accusative, CONJ = conjunctive, COP = copula, DAT = dative, EVID = evidential, GEN = genitive, NMLZ = nominalizer, NOM = nominative, NPST = nonpast tense, PAST = past tense, PL = plural, POL = polite verb form, Q = question marker, QUOT = quotative, TOP = topic marker. In order to avoid irrelevant complexity, some morphological information is simplified.

- (1) a. *Okada-san ga okane o kashi-te kure-ta.*
 Okada NOM money ACC lend-CONJ give-PAST
 Lit. ‘Mr. Okada gave [me] the favor of lending money.’

Kure- can also be used when the recipient of the transfer is regarded as an insider, as in (1b), but the use of *kure-* is anomalous if the recipient is not an insider. For example, in the anomalous sentence (1c), the referential expression *sono hito* ‘that person’ signals that the speaker does not consider the referent an insider.

- (1) b. *Okada-san ga haha ni okane o kashi-te kure-ta.*
 Okada NOM mother DAT money ACC lend-CONJ give-PAST
 Lit. ‘Mr. Okada gave my mother the favor of lending money.’
 c. #*Okada-san ga sono hito ni okane o kashi-te kure-ta.*
 Okada NOM that person DAT money ACC lend-CONJ give-PAST
 Lit. ‘Mr. Okada gave the person the favor of lending money.’

Thus, a common analysis treats insiders as *extended self* — the boundary between self and others is regarded as shifting or unstable.

The fluidity of in-group and out-group boundaries can be observed in the proper usage of honorific/humble forms of the predicate. While talking with a colleague about their company president, the speaker should use an honorific form when the president is encoded as subject, as in (2a); however, s/he should use a humble form with respect to him-/herself, as in (2b).

- (2) a. *Shachoo wa shusseki nasai-mas-u.*
 president TOP attend do(honorific)-POL-NPST
 ‘The president will attend [the meeting].’
 b. *Watashi wa shusseki itashi-mas-u.*
 I TOP attend do(humble)-POL-NPST
 ‘I’ll attend [the meeting].’

On the other hand, when the addressee is a client, the speaker is conventionally considered to represent the company, and a humble form must be used even when the subject referent is the company president — as if the president is part of, or belongs to, the (extended) self. Suppose that the president’s name is Tanaka. Because *shachoo* ‘company president’ can be categorized as an honorific referential term, rather than a neutral descriptive term, the use of *shachoo* in this context is inappropriate, much less the honorific form of the predicate. In this situation, a sentence like (2c) with *Tanaka* as subject is mandatory.

- (2) c. *Tanaka wa shusseki itashi-mas-u.*
 Tanaka TOP attend do(humble)-POL-NPST
 ‘Tanaka (i.e. the president) will attend [the meeting].’

Mainly from these characteristics of the Japanese language, Wetzel (1984, 1994) concludes that the ‘I’ of Indo-European languages is not the universal deictic ground, and that the deictic anchor point in Japanese is a collectively defined vantage point represented as *uchi* (‘in-group’). Similarly, Bachnik (1994:28) remarks that *uchi* is the locus of the self, which is thus defined

within a collectivity. Kondo (1990:147) goes so far as to say, “By speaking, one inevitably speaks as a person embedded in a particular *uchi*. One is never an isolated individual.”

3. THE ABSOLUTE SELF IN JAPANESE

3.1. The absolute self and psych predicates

In the previous section, the relational model of Japanese self was described: unlike the Western self, the Japanese self has been claimed to be unstable, constantly shifting, and context-dependent. However, this model is inconsistent with some significant characteristics of the Japanese language. Those characteristics are subsumed under the rubric of *evidentiality* (or accessibility of information) (e.g. Chafe & Nichols 1986, Kamio 1997). In this section we will show that an adequate account of such phenomena requires a notion of absolute self that is distinct from others and cannot be assimilated into the in-group, thus contradicting the notion of relational and shifting self.

The Japanese language forces its users to delineate strictly between the self and all others by prohibiting phrases that express human sensations, feelings, desires, or mental activities when the speaker does not have direct access to the source.¹⁰ The predicates that are subject to this restriction are sometimes called *psych predicates* (cf. Kuroda 1973, Shibatani 1990:383-385). Psych predicates can be used only to describe the speaking self, and no others.¹¹ For example, in (3), *samu-* ‘feel cold’ can take *watashi* ‘I’ as subject, but not *haha* ‘mother’. When the subject is not the first person, some evidential expression is necessary, as in (3c-d).

- (3) a. *Watashi wa samu-i.*
I TOP feel.cold-NPST
‘I feel cold.’
- b. # *Haha wa samu-i.*
mother TOP feel.cold-NPST
‘My mother feels cold.’ [Intended]
- c. *Haha wa samu-gat-te i-ru.*
mother TOP feel.cold-EVID-CONJ be-NPST
Lit. ‘My mother is showing signs of feeling cold.’
- d. *Haha wa samu-soo da.*
mother TOP feel.cold-EVID COP.NPST
‘My mother appears to feel cold.’

This restriction on psych predicates and their potential subjects is so inflexible that when the predicate is polysemous, the semantic role of the subject necessarily shifts to conform to this restriction. In (4), *kanashi-* ‘be sad’ can indicate either the subject’s being sad (subject = experiencer) or some entity causing a sad feeling in the speaker’s mind (subject =

¹⁰ The direct representation of subjective experiences (represented consciousness) other than the speaker’s own yields what Banfield (1982) refers to as an *unspeakable sentence* — i.e., one which cannot occur naturally in spoken language. Kuroda (1973) calls the style where such expressions appear with only first-person subjects the *reportive style*. In reportive style, only the speaker is entitled to express his/her own psychological state. In the *nonreportive style*, by contrast, third-person subjects are permitted for such expressions.

¹¹ The restriction is strongest in the present tense and in main clauses. One of the anonymous reviewers points out that the former is likely due to the fact that information about the past can be gained in various ways.

stimulus/source). When the subject is the speaker, the former construal automatically applies; otherwise, the latter does.

- (4) a. *Watashi wa kanashi-i.*
 I TOP be.sad-NPST
 ‘I’m sad.’
 b. *Haha wa kanashi-i.*
 mother TOP be.sad-NPST
 ‘My mother makes me sad.’ NOT ‘My mother is sad.’

Expressions of desire also belong to the category of psych predicates. In (5), the construction Verb+*ta-* ‘to want to do X’ can be used with a first-person subject (5a), but not with other subjects (5b). As with the expressions of sensation, an evidential expression is necessary for a third-person subject (5c).

- (5) a. *Watashi wa koohii o nomi-ta-i.*
 I TOP coffee ACC drink-want-NPST
 ‘I want to drink coffee.’
 b. *#Haha wa koohii o nomi-ta-i.*
 mother TOP coffee ACC drink-want-NPST
 ‘My mother wants to drink coffee.’ [Intended]
 c. *Haha wa koohii o nomi-ta-gat-te i-ru.*
 mother TOP coffee ACC drink-want-EVID-CONJ be-NPST
 Lit. ‘My mother is showing signs of wanting to drink coffee.’

Omow- ‘think’ is another type of psych predicate, and, as such, it cannot be used to describe a third-person’s mental state (cf. Nakau 1994; see also section 4.1 below for further discussion of *omow-*).

- (6) a. *Watashi wa haha wa byooki da to omo-u.*
 I TOP mother TOP ill COP.NPST QUOT think-NPST
 ‘I think my mother is ill.’
 b. *Haha wa byooki da to omo-u.*
 mother TOP ill COP.NPST QUOT think-NPST
 ‘I think my mother is ill.’ NOT ‘My mother thinks she is ill.’
 c. *Haha wa (jibun wa/ga) byooki da to omot-te i-ru.*
 mother TOP self TOP/NOM ill COP.NPST QUOT think-CONJ be-NPST
 Lit. ‘My mother_i is thinking she_i is ill.’
 ‘My mother_i thinks she_i is ill.’

In (6a), the matrix subject, *watashi* ‘I’, of which *omow-* is predicative, is overtly present. In (6b), by contrast, *watashi* does not appear, and it might seem that *haha* ‘mother’ could be taken as the overtly-present potential subject of *omow-*, and yet this construal is impossible: the subject of *omow-* must still be *watashi*, or in the first person. For a third-person subject,

the auxiliary verb phrase *-te i-* must be added to *omow-*, as in (6c).¹² (If the embedded subject, *jibun* ‘self’, in (6c) were absent, the subject of *byooki da* ‘is ill’ would be construed with either the matrix subject or an arbitrary referent being talked about in the discourse.)

This constraint is not on the potential grammatical subject per se, but rather on the accessibility of information. In ordinary conversation, others’ mental states are not directly accessible to the speaker. In the context of a novel, on the other hand, the author can use psych predicates freely with third-person subjects because s/he, as creator, can be omniscient, and therefore has direct access to a character’s mental state. In fact, expressions like (7) are common in narrative fiction.

- (7) *Akiko wa haha wa byooki da to omot-ta.*
 Akiko TOP mother TOP ill COP.NPST QUOT think-PAST
 ‘Akiko thought her mother was ill.’

Examination of the examples in this section reveals that the relevant notion of self here is absolute and cannot be relational or context-dependent; furthermore, the boundary between self and others cannot be fluid. That is, as shown in the (b) examples of (3)-(6), typical in-group members such as *haha* ‘mother’ cannot be regarded as extended self, nor can the self be assimilated into the in-group. This very fact indicates that the Japanese language presupposes a strong awareness of self, however primordial such a notion of self may be. Furthermore, it is difficult to envision that such a language has been formed by a speech community lacking the concept of individual self, akin to the Western notion of self, contrary to those who contend that Japan is a “selfless” society. What we have observed about psych predicates is a well-known fact in Japanese linguistics, but somehow it has never received serious attention in research on Japanese society and culture. The prevailing relational model of self is inconsistent with this aspect of the Japanese language.

3.2. The primacy of the absolute self

So far we have observed that the Japanese language appears to involve both relational and absolute notions of self. But are they equally essential? We would argue that recognition of the absolute self is an integral part of Japanese, but that recognition of relational self is not. This section demonstrates this primacy of the absolute self over the relational self, using linguistic and extralinguistic data.

First, linguistic expressions based on the absolute self are learned by children automatically and unconsciously, whereas expressions requiring the notion of relational self must be explicitly taught by adults. Our experiment indicates that even first graders are not confused as to whose opinion is represented in a sentence like (8) with a psych predicate *omow-* ‘think’: it is the

¹² This constraint is due to the fact that *omow-* is a modality expression. Nakau (1994) defines modality as the speaker’s mental attitude toward the proposition or the speech act *at the time of utterance*, conceived as the speaker’s instantaneous present (46). As a modality expression, *omow-* refers to the instantaneous present. “Of all the mental attitudes which manifest themselves simultaneously with the time of speech, it is only his/her own mental attitude that the speaker can have accessible to him/her” (51). Therefore, the use of *omow-* with a third-person subject results in anomaly. *Omot-te-iru*, on the other hand, is an expression for the continuous present and can be used to describe a mental activity of a third-person as well as the speaker. A question arises here as to why the use of *omot-te-iru* makes it acceptable to describe another person’s mental state which is not directly accessible. The discussion of this issue, however, is beyond the scope of the present article.

speaker's own, not her mother's or teacher's or any other insider's opinion. Sentence (8) was shown to Japanese first graders who were asked who thought who would come. They correctly answered that the person who was speaking thought Aki would come.

- (8) *Aki-chan kuru to omo-u.*
 Aki-HYPOCORISTIC come.NPST QUOT think-NPST
 '[I] think Aki will come.' NOT 'Aki thinks [she/someone else] will come.'

On the other hand, the use of the situation-sensitive term *haha* to refer to one's own mother is usually taught as part of elementary or grammar school education.

Expressions that presuppose the shifting (relational) self as illustrated in (2), repeated here for convenience, are artificial, not natural, parts of language as linguists conceive them.

- (2) a. *Shachoo wa shusseki nasai-mas-u.*
 president TOP attend do(honorific)-POL-NPST
 'The president will attend [the meeting].'
 b. *Watashi wa shusseki itashi-mas-u.*
 I TOP attend do(humble)-POL-NPST
 'I'll attend [the meeting].'
 c. *Tanaka wa shusseki itashi-mas-u.*
 Tanaka TOP attend do(humble)-POL-NPST
 'Tanaka (i.e. the president) will attend [the meeting].'

Honorifics are so esoteric that while many Japanese acquire the usage of very basic ones, manipulation of honorific and humble forms according to the situation illustrated here is not learned naturally. Many companies provide their employees with honorific-language lessons as part of their on-the-job training. These employees, most of whom are college graduates, have not naturally acquired such language in their twenty-plus years of life. Books teaching proper use of honorifics are always in great demand and found in virtually all book stores and libraries in urban communities. Therefore, it is debatable whether or not shifting one's self according to the addressee is an integral part of the Japanese language even though it may be an integral part of Japanese culture. It is indeed amazing that the Japanese continue to maintain their elaborate honorific language at such a high cost. On the other hand, the presence of the individual (absolute) self is unquestionable in Japanese.¹³

Second, most dialects of Japanese provide neither dual kinship terms nor a systematic distinction between plain vs. honorific/humble forms of predicates. The elaboration of the honorific system was begun in Late Old Japanese by members of the Japanese aristocracy living in and around Kyoto, the capital city at the time. Unlike the Tokyo dialect, which borrowed a considerable number of honorific expressions from the Kyoto dialect, most other dialects do not have the elaborate honorific systems that are frequently cited in literature on Japanese society (cf. Shibatani 1990:123-26). Much the same is true of the donatory verbs *kure-* and *age-*. As

¹³ An anonymous reviewer has raised the question of whether native speakers of Japanese have difficulty with the usage of donatory verbs just as they do with that of honorifics. Although errors are occasionally observable, the use of the donatory verbs seems to be acquired much more easily than that of honorifics, despite the fact that both cases involve the recognition of relational self. At present, we are unable to explain this difference.

noted in Numata (1999:55), for example, the distinction between the two is not made in all Japanese dialects; some dialects use *kure-* constantly to describe giving situations (cf. also Hidaka 1994, 1997).¹⁴ In the absence of evidence to the contrary, we do not assume dialectal differences in the notion of Japanese self.

Third, it is difficult to envisage that modern Japanese youth, especially those living in urban communities, do not develop the concept of individual self in their extremely competitive environment, notably referred to as *juken jigoku* ‘examination hell’. In modern Japan, one’s potential future employment is largely determined from a very early age. Popular companies hire their employees from a pool of graduates of prestigious universities. The possibility of admission to a prestigious university is greater for one who has attended a prestigious secondary school. To be accepted by a prestigious high school, it is safer to go to a prestigious middle school, and in order to enter a prestigious middle school, one aims at a prestigious elementary school. Many parents even begin their children’s preparation at the kindergarten level. During their education, Japanese youth regularly take standardized tests, and they are informed of their rankings with all other examinees. Studying as a preparation for the next level of education is a purely personal and individual activity. One’s current school’s prestige or family affluence does not have any effects on such rankings. There are many “cram schools,” called *juku*, where the emphasis is to overcome oneself, rather than to compete with others. Again, this fact runs counter to the idea that the Japanese concept of self extends to involve other individuals.¹⁵

Finally, there is grammatical evidence of the notion that absolute self is more fundamental than relational self. As mentioned earlier, the verb *kure-* ‘give’ is used when a favor is done for the speaker and s/he is grateful for it. It can also be used when the beneficiary is an insider such as one’s mother. In the theory of relational self, this is made possible because the boundary between self and others shifts, assimilating the self into its in-group. Consequently, a third-person beneficiary (in this case, the speaker’s mother) is included in the notion of relational self. We have also observed that the use of psych predicates, such as *omow-* ‘think’, is restricted to the first-person subject. Now let us examine the case in which these two kinds of predicates both occur in a single sentence. Compare the following examples:

¹⁴ An example of dialects that do not distinguish between *kure-* and *age-* is the Gokayama dialect, spoken in Toyama Prefecture. According to Hidaka (1994), speakers of this dialect use *kure-*, as in (i), when speakers of Tokyo Japanese use *yar-*, a less polite version of *age-*, as in (ii).

- (i) a. *Sonna mon, ano ko ni kure yo.*
 such thing that kid DAT give I.tell.you
 ‘Give something like it to that kid.’
- b. *Kono hon, omae-rachi kyoodai no uchi no dareka ni kury-oo.*
 this book you-PL brother GEN in GEN someone DAT give-will
 ‘I will give this book to one of you brothers.’
- (ii) a. *Sonna mono, ano ko ni yare yo.*
 such thing that kid DAT give I.tell.you
 ‘Give something like it to that kid.’
- b. *Kono hon, omae-tachi kyoodai no uchi no dareka ni yar-oo.*
 this book you-PL brother GEN in GEN someone DAT give-will
 ‘I will give this book to one of you brothers.’

In Gokayama dialect *kure-* is employed even when the recipient of the transfer is an outsider; hence no concept of relational self is involved in its use.

¹⁵ An anonymous referee has commented that it might be the case that Japanese youth strive, at least in part, to bring credit to their family, school, etc. While we cannot deny this possibility, it would sound very odd for a Japanese child to articulate such an idea.

- (9) a. *Watashi wa Okada-san ga uchi made okut-te kure-ru to omo-u.*
 I TOP Okada NOM house to take-CONJ give-NPST QUOT
 think-NPST
 Lit. ‘I think Mr. Okada will give me/insider [the favor of] taking me/insider home.’
- b. *#Sono hito wa Okada-san ga uchi made okut-te kure-ru to omo-u.*
 that person TOP
 Lit. ‘I think Mr. Okada will give that person [the favor of] taking him/her home.’
 [Intended]
- c. *Haha wa Okada-san ga uchi made okut-te kure-ru to omo-u.*
 mother TOP
 Lit. ‘I think Mr. Okada will give my mother [the favor of] taking her home.’
 NOT ‘My mother thinks Mr. Okada will give her [the favor of] taking her home.’

A noun phrase marked with the topic particle *wa* can generally be the subject or object of a predicate because *wa* does not specify the noun phrase’s grammatical function. In (9a) the *wa*-marked *watashi* is normally construed as both the subject of the predicate *omow-* and the destination of the favor (i.e. the indirect object of *kure-*). It can also be construed as the subject of *omow-* only; in such a case, the destination of the favor is someone in the speaker’s in-group who has already been introduced into discourse or someone with a pragmatically understood very-close relationship (e.g. a younger sibling) even if that person has not explicitly been mentioned within that speech event. By contrast, sentence (9b) is anomalous because *sono hito* ‘that person’ has no role in the sentence: it can be neither the subject of the psych predicate *omow-* (because it is not the first person) nor the destination of the favor (because the referent cannot be interpreted as an insider). The crucial case is (9c). Although the *wa*-marked NP is still a third person, unlike (9b), the sentence is acceptable. However, as the translation indicates, *haha* in (9c) is construed only as the destination of the favor, not as the subject of *omow-*. Although the mother is understood to be an insider (extended self), and thus can be the goal of *kure-* ‘give’, the use of the psych predicate *omow-* is still impossible with *haha* as its subject.

This fact affirms that the self and the mother belong to different conceptual categories — the former permits a direct expression about a mental state based on the guaranteed accessibility to the source, but the latter does not, due to the lack of such accessibility. It appears that the absolute self (the subject of *omow-*) and the relational self (the indirect object of *kure-*) can both operate independently in one sentence, each in response to a different predicate type. A question raised here is which one should be considered more salient.

We propose a test with deixis. The verb *k-* ‘come’ indicates the motion toward the speaker or toward the place considered to be the speaker’s territory, e.g. his/her own home or place of employment; the verb *ik-* ‘go’ indicates motion of any orientation except toward the speaker or his/her territory. When the mover is the speaker, *k-* is selected if s/he is at the goal, and *ik-* if s/he is at the origin at the time of speech. Unlike English *come/go*, the deictic center of *k-/ik-* is restricted to the speaker, with only few exceptions (cf. Hasegawa 1993 for further discussion). Therefore, it is worth investigating which deictic center the verb *k-* selects. Suppose that the speaker and her mother are living separately in the situation depicted in (9c). *Uchi* ‘house’ can then be either the mother’s house or the speaker’s. Let us now add *k-* to the sentence:

- (9) d. *Haha wa Okada-san ga uchi made okut-te ki-te kure-ru*
 mother TOP Okada NOM house to take-CONJ **come-CONJ** give-NPST
to omo-u.
 QUOT think-NPST
 Lit. ‘I think Mr. Okada will give my mother [the favor of] bringing her [to my] home.’

In (9d), the verb *k-* occurs inside the embedded quotative clause whose predicate is *kure-*. Unlike *kure-*, which permits the relational self as its indirect object, *k-* does not normally accommodate *haha* as its deictic center. Consequently *uchi* in (9d) is understood as the speaker’s house, not that of her mother. In a marked interpretation, however, *uchi* can be construed as the speaker’s mother’s house. Such an interpretation assumes that (i) the speaker considers her mother’s house as her territory or (ii) the speaker will be at the goal at the movers’ intended arrival time. The latter use of *k-* is illustrated in (10).

- (10) *Jon ga konban roku-ji ni soko ni kimasu node, watashi ga*
 John NOM tonight 6 o’clock at there to **come-NPST** because I NOM
saki-ni it-te mat-te i-masu. (Oe 1975)
 ahead go-CONJ wait-CONJ be-NPST
 Lit. ‘John is coming there at six tonight, so I’m going there first and will wait (for him).’

If the speaker does not intend to be at her mother’s house when Okada and her mother arrive there, *ik-* ‘go’, but not *k-*, is used, as shown in (9e).

- (9) e. *Haha wa Okada-san ga uchi made okut-te it-te kure-ru*
 mother TOP Okada NOM house to take-CONJ **go-CONJ** give-NPST
to omo-u.
 QUOT think-NPST
 Lit. ‘I think Mr. Okada will give my mother [the favor of] bringing her [to her] home.’

Examples (9d-e) illustrate that the deictic center is determined independently of relational self. Because spatiotemporal deixis is a reliable indicator of the location of the speaker’s point of view at the speech time, we take this fact as evidence that the absolute self takes precedence over the relational self, and we consider the former to be more essential to the Japanese language than the latter.

4. PUBLIC VS. PRIVATE SELF

4.1. Public vs. private expression

We have seen that it is indisputable that all competent speakers of Japanese possess a clear and rigid concept of self, without which idiomatic Japanese is impossible. This absolute self is individualistic, neither part of a group nor interpersonal. Linguistically speaking, the absolute self is the one whose mental states the speaker can directly access and thus the one which the speaker is privileged to express without evidential sources — that is, it is essentially identical

with the Cartesian notion of self. In other words, the self in question is the speaker as the center of “locutionary subjectivity,” i.e. self-expression in the use of language (Lyons 1994, 1995).¹⁶

It is significant that, if we define the term *self* in terms of locutionary subjectivity, it can hardly be language specific; it should apply to all languages. On the other hand, we have also observed that certain Japanese linguistic phenomena strongly suggest the situationally-shifting Japanese self. Therefore, one might continue to argue that there are, nonetheless, some significant differences between the Japanese self and the Western self. One might point out, for example, that the Western self is by far more constant, referred to uniformly by a designated first person pronoun like *I*, not present in Japanese. If there is no fundamental difference between the notions of Japanese and Western selves, how can such radical differences be accounted for? This section is devoted to this problem. It is argued that although the notion of speaker as the center of locutionary subjectivity is universal, the speaker has two different aspects of self — *public* and *private*. The English and Japanese languages differ in the way those aspects are encoded in their lexico-grammatical systems.

The public self is the speaker as the subject of communicating, i.e. the speaker who faces an addressee or has one in mind. The private self is the speaker as the subject of thinking/consciousness, with no addressee in mind. These public and private selves appear in two different kinds of linguistic expressions called *public* and *private expression*, respectively. Public expression corresponds to the communicative function of language; private expression corresponds to the non-communicative, thought-expressing function of language. Public expression necessarily requires the presence of an addressee; private expression lacks the presence of an addressee.¹⁷

Some words or phrases inherently presuppose the existence of an addressee, e.g. (a) certain sentence-final particles (e.g. *yo* ‘I tell you’, *ne* ‘you know’), (b) imperatives (e.g. *tomare* ‘Stop!’), (c) vocatives (e.g. *ooi/oi* ‘hey’), (d) responses (e.g. *hai* ‘yes’, *iie* ‘no’), (e) pragmatic adverbials of various sorts (e.g. *sumimasen ga* ‘Excuse me, but’, *kokodake no hanashi dakedo* ‘it’s between you and me’), (f) polite forms of verbals (e.g. *desu/masu*), (g) hearsay expressions (e.g. *(da)sooda/(da)tte* ‘I hear’). These addressee-oriented words or phrases appear exclusively in public expressions. Conversely, phrases and sentences containing addressee-oriented expressions

¹⁶ For Lyons, locutionary subjectivism is a linguistic version of Cartesian subjectivism. See Lyons (1982) for discussion.

¹⁷ Private expression should not be confused with so-called inner speech. Inner speech, in the sense of mental utterance, takes the form of talking to oneself or someone else in one’s mind. Inner speech assumes an intended addressee who is either one’s other self or someone else; thus it can be viewed as a quasi-communicative act. On the other hand, private expression corresponds to thinking as a mental state or process in which no addressee is assumed. The distinction between private and public expression is practically parallel to the distinction Searle (1983:165-166) makes between representation and communication:

“We need to have a clear distinction between representation and communication. Characteristically a man who makes a statement both intends to represent some fact or state of affairs and intends to communicate this representation to his hearers. But his representing intention is not the same as his communication intention. Communicating is a matter of producing certain effects on one’s hearers, but one can intend to represent something without caring at all about the effects on one’s hearers. ... There are, therefore, two aspects to meaning intentions, the intention to represent and the intention to communicate. The traditional discussion of these problems, my own work included, suffers from a failure to distinguish between them and from the assumption that the whole account of meaning can be given in terms of communication intentions. On the present account, representation is prior to communication and representing intentions are prior to communication intentions. Part of what one communicates is the content of one’s representations, but one can intend to represent something without intending to communicate.”

are public expressions. On the other hand, phrases and sentences that lack addressee-oriented expressions can be either public or private: if the speaker intends to communicate with another person, the expressions are public; otherwise, they are private (see Hirose 1995 for further discussion).

While public expressions involve communicative intention, private expressions correspond to mental states. In Japanese, mental states are typically described by verbs like *omow-* ‘think’. *Omow-* and other mental-state verbs can take as a complement a reported clause marked by the quotative particle *to*. Descriptions of what one thinks, believes, doubts, or wishes are necessarily private expressions, and mental-state verbs allow only a private expression as their reported-clause complement. In the following examples, angle brackets with the subscript *Priv* represent a private expression; square brackets with the subscript *Pub* represent a public expression.

- (11) a. *Haruo wa* <_{Priv} *ame ni-chigainai*> *to omot-te i-ru.*
 Haruo TOP rain must QUOT think-CONJ be-NPST
 ‘Haruo thinks it must be raining.’
- b. *Haruo wa* <_{Priv} *ame daroo*> *to omot-te i-ru.*
 Haruo TOP rain will QUOT think-CONJ be-NPST
 ‘Haruo thinks it will be raining.’
- (12) a. #*Haruo wa* [_{Pub} *ame da yo*] *to omot-te i-ru.*
 Haruo TOP rain be I.tell.you QUOT think-CONJ be-NPST
 ‘Haruo thinks “It is raining, I tell you.”’ [Intended]
- b. #*Haruo wa* [_{Pub} *ame desu*] *to omot-te i-ru.*
 Haruo TOP rain be.POL QUOT think-CONJ be-NPST
 ‘Haruo thinks politely “It is raining.”’ [Intended]

Each of the sentences in (11) contains a private expression as its reported clause, which in turn includes a modal expression representing a mental state of certainty or conjecture highlighted in bold face. In (12), on the other hand, the words in bold face are addressee-oriented expressions, making the whole reported clauses public expressions. Because public expressions cannot be complements of mental-state verbs, (12a-b) are anomalous.

Unlike mental-state verbs, utterance verbs such as *iw-* ‘say’ allow either a public or private expression as their reported clause. The reported clauses in (13) are public expressions, generally considered direct discourse.

- (13) a. *Haruo wa Natsuko ni* [_{Pub} *ame da yo*] *to it-ta.*
 Haruo TOP Natsuko DAT rain COP.NPST I.tell.you QUOT say-PAST
 ‘Haruo said to Natsuko, “It is raining, I tell you.”’
- b. *Haruo wa Natsuko ni* [_{Pub} *ame des-u*] *to it-ta.*
 Haruo TOP Natsuko DAT rain COP.POL-NPST QUOT say-PAST
 ‘Haruo politely said to Natsuko, “It is raining.”’

Haruo’s belief that it is raining in (13) can also be reported as private expression, using indirect discourse, as in (14):

- (14) *Haruo wa Natsuko ni <Priv ame da> to it-ta.*
 Haruo TOP Natsuko DAT rain COP.NPST QUOT say-PAST
 ‘Haruo told Natsuko that it was raining.’

These observations lead to the following hypothesis (originally formulated in Hirose 1995:230):

- (15) Direct discourse is a quotation of public expression, whereas indirect discourse is a quotation of private expression.

While direct quotations can convey communicative attitudes of the original speaker, indirect quotations can report only mental states per se of the original speaker, which are inferred by the speaker of the current speech act.

4.2. Words for private and public selves

Japanese has a distinct word for the private self: the reflexive pronoun *jibun* ‘self’. The public self is referred to by various terms of self-reference such as *atai* (female-vulgar), *atashi* (female-casual), *boku* (male-casual), *oir/ora* (male-vulgar), *ore* (male-casual/vulgar), *watakushi* (super formal), *watashi* (male-formal or female-formal/informal). Moreover, kinship terms like *okaasan* ‘mother’ and the occupational title *sensei* ‘teacher’ can also be used for the purpose of self-reference. Selection of a particular public term of self-reference in a given situation depends on the speaker and addressee, as well as the topic and formality of the speech situation (cf. Suzuki 1973, 1984).¹⁸ This fact is frequently employed as supporting evidence for the group model. According to the present framework, it is only the public self that is situation sensitive. The speaker’s private self is invariably represented by *jibun*.¹⁹

Let us now examine (16a-b), both of which are intended to mean ‘my consciousness of being a genius’. Because one’s inner consciousness per se is described, these are private expressions. The acceptability contrast between (16a-b) confirms that *jibun* refers to the private self, whereas so-called first-person pronominals like *watashi* refer to the public self (Hirose 2000:1631).

¹⁸ Japanese also has many terms that designate the addressee: e.g. *anata* (male-formal or female-formal/informal), *anta* (male/female-informal), *kimi* (male-casual), *omae* (male-casual/vulgar), and *omee/temee* (male-vulgar). These addressee-designating terms are not used for one’s superiors. For that purpose, kinship terms like *otoosan/okaasan* ‘father/mother’ and *ojisan/obasan* ‘uncle/aunt’ and occupational titles like *sensei* ‘teacher’ and *shachoo* ‘president’ are used. The multiplicity of words for ‘I’ and ‘you’ is seen not only in Japanese but in other Asian languages such as Korean and Thai (cf. Diller 1994, Whitman 1999, inter alia). Incidentally, Onishi (1994) claims within the framework of Natural Semantic Metalanguage developed by Wierzbicka and her associates (e.g. Goddard and Wierzbicka 1994) that among the many first- and second-person terms in Japanese, *ore* and *omae* are the closest equivalents of ‘I’ and ‘you’ despite their pragmatic restrictions concerning gender and formality. We do not examine Onishi’s claim in detail here, but for our purposes it is important to note that *ore*, although often used in inner speech, is a term for public self, not for private self, because, as pointed out by Onishi (1994:365), it implies an addressee designated by *omae* (for discussion of inner speech as an act of communicating in one’s mind, see Hirose 1995:235-237).

¹⁹ Investigating Japanese deictic terms, Kuroda (1992) discusses soliloquy. He uses *omae* ‘you’ in inner speech (i.e. speaking to himself), e.g. *Omae wa nante baka na koto o shitan da* ‘What a silly thing you did!’, and *jibun* for a pure representation of a mental state, e.g. *Jibun wa hatashite sonzai shite iru no daroo ka* ‘Am I really existing?’.

- (16) a. *Jibun wa tensai da to iu ishiki*
 self TOP genius COP.NPST QUOT say consciousness
 Lit. ‘the consciousness: I’m a genius’
 ‘the consciousness of being a genius’
- b. ??*Watashi wa tensai da to iu ishiki*
 I TOP genius COP.NPST QUOT say consciousness
 Lit. ‘the consciousness of the fact that I am a genius’ [Intended]
 ‘the consciousness of being a genius’ [Intended]

Example (16a) is perfectly acceptable; it is a self-contained expression in which *jibun* refers to the subject of consciousness, whoever s/he actually is. By contrast, (16b) sounds odd because *watashi* is a public expression, presupposing an addressee, and hence should not appear in a description of consciousness proper. Public-expression pronouns are used by the speaker to refer to herself only when she has a communicative intention. Thus, if (16b) is used in a communicative situation in which the speaker reports her own consciousness to another person, it becomes acceptable, e.g. (17b).

- (17) a. *Watashi ga jibun wa tensai da to iu ishiki*
 I NOM self TOP genius COP.NPST QUOT say consciousness
o motta no wa choodo sono toki deshi-ta.
 ACC had NMLZ TOP just that time COP.POL-PAST
 Lit. ‘It was at just that time that I acquired the consciousness: I’m a genius.’
 ‘It was just at that point in time that I became aware of my genius.’
- b. *Watashi ga watashi wa tensai da to iu ishiki*
 I NOM I TOP genius COP.NPST QUOT say consciousness
o motta no wa choodo sono toki deshi-ta.
 ACC had NMLZ TOP just that time COP.POL-PAST
 Lit. ‘It was just at that time that I acquired a consciousness of the fact that I was a genius.’
 ‘It was just at that point in time that I became aware of my genius.’

Objectively, both (17a-b) depict the same situation: viz. the speaker became aware of her genius at a certain point in the past (perhaps as a result of counseling subsequent to testing). The difference is that this awareness is represented directly within the private domain in (17a), but indirectly from the outer, public domain in (17b). At first glance, the functions of *watashi* in (16b) and (17b) appear to be identical, both referring to the private self as the subject of consciousness. However, the use of *watashi* in (17b) is licensed by the speaker as a communicating agent (i.e. the outer, public self), whereas (16b) lacks such a communicative context and therefore brings about anomaly (see Hirose 2000 for further discussion).

Note in this connection that *boku* in (18) is ambiguous with respect to its reference:

- (18) *Akio wa boku wa oyoge-na-i to it-te i-ru.*
 Akio TOP I TOP swim.cannot-NPST QUOT say-CONJ be-NPST
- (a) ‘Akio_i says, “I_i can’t swim.”’
 (b) ‘Akio says that I can’t swim.’

Here, *boku* can refer to either Akio (18a) or the speaker (18b). In the former interpretation the reported clause is direct discourse, while in the latter it is indirect discourse. This ambiguity arises because there are two possibilities of delimiting the public expression — whether the entire reported clause is a public expression or just part of it is, as represented in (19a-b).²⁰

- (19) a. *Akio wa* [_{Pub} *boku wa oyogenai*] *to itte iru.*
 ‘Akio_i says, “I_i can’t swim.”’
 b. *Akio wa* <_{Priv} [_{Pub} *boku*] *wa oyogenai*> *to itte iru.*
 ‘Akio says I can’t swim.’

In (19a) the whole reported clause is a public expression, and *boku*, representing a public self, must be construed with the subject Akio. In (19b), the reported clause is a private expression, and if Akio should appear there, he would have to be depicted as a private self. However, because *boku* cannot refer to a private self, it cannot be construed with Akio. The only plausible interpretation of *boku* here is the speaker, who depicts himself not in Akio’s words but in his own words, based on his role as the public self.

On the other hand, *boku* in (20) with the mental-state verb *shinji-* ‘believe’ is unambiguous, referring only to the speaker:

- (20) *Akio wa boku wa oyoge-na-i to shinji-te i-ru.*
 Akio TOP I TOP swim.cannot-NPST QUOT believe-CONJ be-NPST
 ‘Akio believes that I can’t swim.’

As indicated earlier, unlike utterance verbs, mental-state verbs do not allow public expressions in their complements. Therefore, (20) can have only one representation (21), where the public expression *boku* is construed with the speaker for the same reason as (19b).

- (21) *Akio wa* <_{Priv} [_{Pub} *boku*] *wa oyogenai*> *to shinjite iru.*

In order to say that Akio believes that he cannot swim, the use of *jibun* is needed. Because *jibun* represents a private self and Akio in (22) is the subject of the private expression, *jibun* must be construed exclusively with Akio.

- (22) *Akio wa* <_{Priv} *jibun wa oyoge-na-i*> *to shinji-te i-ru.*
 Akio TOP self TOP swim.cannot-NPST QUOT believe-CONJ be-NPST
 ‘Akio_i believes that he_i can’t swim.’

The use of *jibun* in (22) is generally known as *logophoric*. To account for this use, Kuno (1978:213) postulates that when *jibun* is used in the subordinate clause of a verb of utterance, thought, or consciousness, it refers to the speaker or experiencer of that utterance, thought, or consciousness. This logophoric character of *jibun* follows naturally from the fact that it is a

²⁰ Because the quotative particle *to*, unlike the English complementizer *that*, can freely introduce both direct and indirect discourse, it is much more difficult in Japanese than in English to distinguish syntactically between direct and indirect discourse (e.g. Coulmas 1985). This fact makes Hypothesis (15) all the more significant in Japanese. This hypothesis is applicable to English as well, on which see Hirose (1995).

special word that represents the private self as distinct from the public self.²¹

It is important to note that *jibun* can be used invariably to refer to any person's private self, as illustrated in (23).

- (23) {*Boku/Kimi/Ano hito*} *wa jibun wa oyoge-na-i to it-ta.*
I/you/that person TOP self TOP swim.cannot-NPST QUOT say-PAST
Lit. ' {I/You/That person} said that self can't swim.'

This situation is analogous to the fact that English *I* can be consistently used to refer to any speaker. The difference is as follows: Japanese has the designated word *jibun* for the private self, but it lacks a designated word for the public self. The public self in Japanese is referred to by using a variety of terms for self including *boku* and *watashi*, depending on the communicative situation. By contrast, English has the designated word *I* for the public self, but it lacks a designated word for the private self. The private self in English is referred to by using a variety of personal pronouns, depending on its grammatical person.

One of our basic assumptions is that direct discourse is a quotation of public expression, whereas indirect discourse is a quotation of private expression (i.e. Hypothesis (15)). With this in mind, let us consider the following example, where X indicates an arbitrary person:

- (24) X said, [_{Pub} I can't swim].

In order to convert the direct discourse in (24) into indirect discourse, the word *I*, representing the public self, must be changed into an appropriate word for the private self. However, selection of an appropriate word is impossible unless or until X is identified. That is, English has no special word like Japanese *jibun* that represents the private self invariably. Instead, personal pronouns are used, as shown in (25): if X is *I*, the private self is also *I*; if X is *you*, the private self is also *you*; and if X is *John* or *Mary*, the private self is *he* or *she*.

- (25) a. I_i said <_{Priv} I_i can't swim>.
b. You_i said <_{Priv} you_i can't swim>.
c. { $John_i/Mary_j$ } said <_{Priv} { he_i/she_j } can't swim>.

At this point, let us clarify the relationship between what we called the *absolute* self in

²¹ Besides the logophoric use, *jibun* has other uses exemplified by the following sentences:

- (i) *Fuyuko wa jibun ga aishita otoko ni uragirareta.*
Fuyuko TOP self NOM loved man by was.betrayed
'Fuyuko was betrayed by the man she loved.'
(ii) *Fuyuko wa jibun o semeta.*
Fuyuko TOP self ACC blamed
'Fuyuko blamed herself.'

In (i), *jibun* is used as a *viewpoint* or *empathy* expression (cf. Kuno 1978, 1987) to indicate that the speaker is describing the man Fuyuko loved from Fuyuko's point of view, rather than from the speaker's own. On the other hand, *jibun* in (ii) functions as a *reflexive marker* indicating the reflexivity of one's action, just like the typical use of English reflexive pronouns. We will not go into these two uses of *jibun* here, but it is argued in Hirose (1997, 2002) that they can be analyzed as natural semantic extensions of *jibun*'s primary use for referring to the private self.

Section 3 and the *public* and *private* self here. The absolute self, as opposed to the relational self, is the one whose mental states only the speaker can directly access, that is, none other than the speaker as the center of locutionary subjectivity. The public and private self are two aspects of the absolute self. Thus, in example (3a) in Section 3, repeated here as (26), the absolute self is designated by *watashi*, a term for the public self.

- (26) *Watashi wa samu-i.*
 I TOP feel.cold-NPST
 ‘I feel cold.’

On the other hand, an indirect-discourse sentence like (27) can be used to report a situation in which (26) was uttered by, say, Fuyuko.

- (27) *Fuyuko wa jibun wa samu-i to it-ta.*
 Fuyuko TOP self TOP feel.cold-NPST QUOT say-PAST
 ‘Fuyuko_i said that she_i felt cold.’

Here the absolute self (i.e. the referent of the embedded subject) is designated by *jibun*. *Jibun* in (27) occurs as the subject of a psych predicate. This reveals that it is a first-person concept despite the fact that its antecedent *Fuyuko* is a third person. Note that it is impossible to replace *jibun* with a third-person pronoun *kanojo* ‘she’, as in (28).²²

- (28) *#Fuyuko_i wa kanojo_i wa samu-i to it-ta.*
 Fuyuko TOP she TOP feel.cold-NPST QUOT say-PAST
 ‘Fuyuko_i said that she_i felt cold.’ [Intended]

In short, the absolute self can manifest itself as either a public or a private self.

4.3. Representation of inner consciousness

The two encoding systems of the public and private self could shed light on some subtle, yet profound differences between the Japanese and English languages. Japanese has never developed an exact equivalent for *I*, but it has developed an invariable term to refer to oneself in private expressions (i.e. *jibun*). Although highly speculative in nature, this fact suggests that in Japanese, private expressions may have been more significant than public expressions in the process of the language’s development. In other words, the default unmarked mode was

²² Unlike (28), sentence (i) below is acceptable. In (i) *kanojo* is the overt subject of the matrix predicate, whereas the subject of the embedded psych predicate is unexpressed (symbolized as \emptyset). In this case, the person referred to by *kanojo* said *samu-i*. Because only the person who felt cold can say so with *samu-i*, we infer that the unexpressed subject is coreferential with *kanojo*.

- (i) *Kanojo wa \emptyset samu-i to it-ta.*
 she TOP feel.cold-NPST QUOT say-PAST
 ‘She_i said that (\emptyset _i) felt cold.’

Like (27), the understood embedded subject of (i) can be overtly expressed by *jibun*, as shown in (ii).

- (ii) *Kanojo wa jibun wa samu-i to it-ta.*
 she TOP self TOP feel.cold-NPST QUOT say-PAST
 ‘She_i said that she_i felt cold.’

not communication (i.e. public expressions), but rather representing thought, feelings, etc. (i.e. private expressions). Though we are not claiming that Japanese necessarily developed in this way, we do consider this topic to be worthy of future research.²³

On the other hand, it *is* clear that without explicit public expressions, most Japanese sentences could be considered inadequate for elaborate communication. For example, to convey the message ‘Today is Saturday’ in conversation, Japanese speakers rarely use sentence (29), which contains no public expressions. Instead, they normally utilize sentences like (30a) or (30b), employing the sentence-final particle *yo* or the polite form of copula *desu* (for related discussion, see Matsumoto (1988, 1989), from which examples (29) and (30b) are taken).

- (29) *Kyoo wa doyoobi da.*
today TOP Saturday COP
‘Today is Saturday.’
- (30) a. *Kyoo wa doyoobi da yo.*
today TOP Saturday COP I.tell.you
‘Today is Saturday (I tell you).’
b. *Kyoo wa doyoobi desu.*
today TOP Saturday COP.POL
‘Today is Saturday.’

Utterance (29) sounds like the speaker is talking to him/herself or to a person close enough to use a private expression. When it is inappropriate, impolite, or inelegant to transmit one’s thoughts so directly, Japanese speakers use many expressions suitable for the purpose of interpersonal communication.

English sentences, on the other hand, can be used in various communicative situations without modification. Thus, as Matsumoto (1989:208) observes, when English speakers wish to say *Today is Saturday*, they “can say this sentence in this form to anybody: to their professor as easily as to their friends, to a large audience as easily as to their dog.” In our analysis, communicative aspects are inherent in the basic grammatical system of English, rather than constituting an additional layer.

The aptness of Japanese for direct representation of mental states makes it inherently suitable for description of inner consciousness in fiction and other narratives. In order to represent a character’s inner consciousness, it suffices only to avoid public expression. By contrast, because of its predilection for interpersonal communication, English requires a special style known as “free indirect discourse” in order to represent a character’s inner consciousness. Briefly, free indirect discourse resembles ordinary indirect discourse in selection of person and tense, but it also resembles direct discourse with respect to word order, expressive elements, and the interpretation of such spatiotemporal deictic expressions as *this*, *here*, and *now* (cf. Banfield 1982, Fludernik 1993).

Let us now consider how inner consciousness is represented in Japanese literature. The following examples are cited from Ayako Miura’s novel, *Shiokari Toge* (*Shiokari Pass*):

²³ See Kumakura (1990) and Ikegami (2000) for similar ideas. Hideo Komatsu (personal communication) pointed out that when considering the nature of the modern Japanese language, we need to take into consideration the fact that official (public) documents in Japan were written in (Japanized) Chinese until the late 19th century, and Japanese was considered a non-official — in that sense private — language.

- (31) (i) *Nobuo wa hitsuzensei to iu kotoba o omot-ta.* (ii) ***Jibun wa hitsuzenteki sonzai nano ka, guuzenteki sonzai nano ka.***
 Nobuo TOP necessity QUOT say word ACC think-PAST self TOP
 necessary existence COP.NPST Q accidental existence COP.NPST Q
 Lit. ‘Nobuo thought of the word “necessity”. Is self a necessary existence or an accidental existence?’
- (32) (i) *Nobuo wa kurikaeshite nido yon-da.* (ii) ***Jibun wa hatashite tanohito no tameni inochi o suteru hodono ai o motsukoto ga dekiru daroo ka.***
 Nobuo TOP repeating twice read-PAST self TOP really
 others GEN for.sake life ACC throw.away enough love ACC
 to.have NOM can COP(TENTATIVE) Q
 Lit. ‘Nobuo read [the passage from the Bible] twice. Can self really have enough love to throw away (self’s) life for the sake of others?’

The bold-faced sentences in (31-32) represent the inner consciousness of the character Nobuo. In the English translation by Bill and Sheila Fearnough (1987), these sentences are translated in free indirect style, as indicated in italics below:

- (31’) (i) Nobuo remembered the word ‘necessity’. (ii) *Was his existence a matter of necessity or a matter of chance?*
- (32’) (i) Nobuo read the passage through again. (ii) *Did he really have enough love for somebody else to throw away his life for them?*

In (31-32), *jibun* and *he (his)* both refer to Nobuo’s private self. They are different, however, with respect to who is responsible for the description. Because *jibun* is a private expression, it is Nobuo himself who is referring to his private self as *jibun*. On the other hand, *he (his)* in English translations (31’-32’) is used not by Nobuo but by the narrator, who is referring to Nobuo’s private self by the third-person pronoun. This third-person reference to Nobuo implies that he is being looked at from the narrator’s perspective. In short, Japanese enables the author to represent a protagonist’s inner consciousness directly, but English cannot obliterate the narrator’s presence.

We now turn to the tense employed in (31-32).²⁴ The first sentences of (31-32) are in the past tense because they represent the narrator’s voice, which is typically framed in the past tense in novels. On the other hand, the second, bold-faced sentences are in the nonpast tense (31) or tenseless (32). This is because they represent Nobuo’s inner thoughts in his own words; thus the tense reflects the “now” of Nobuo’s consciousness, separated from the narrator’s narrative time. That is, in Japanese, tenses in private expression are associated with the private self. In the English translations (31’-32’), by contrast, the “now” of Nobuo’s consciousness is expressed in the narrator’s past tense. This is because tenses as well as personal pronouns in English are associated with the public self (cf. Wada 1998, 2001). In free indirect discourse, it is the narrator

²⁴ To simplify the discussion, we have labeled the verbal suffixes -TA and -RU as the past-tense and the nonpast-tense, respectively. However, the primary function of these morphemes is not tense-marking proper. See Hasegawa (1999b) for details.

who plays the role of public self and functions as the primary deictic center.

To recapitulate, in Japanese the inner consciousness of a private self can be represented in a self-contained way, i.e. entirely from the private self's perspective. On the other hand, free indirect discourse in English requires the mediation of a narrator as a public self with regard to the interpretation of personal pronouns and tenses. This contrast between Japanese and English shows that Japanese is essentially a private-self centered language, whereas English is essentially a public-self centered language.

5. THE "NAKED" SELF AND ITS "CLOTHES"

Personal pronouns in English (and other Western languages) form a system centering on the public self *I*, which Japanese lacks. Therefore, if Japanese is viewed with the English personal pronoun system in mind, the notion of Japanese self naturally seems unstable and constantly shifting. As we noted in section 2.5, however, the linguistic phenomena supporting this view are drawn solely from the domain of public expression corresponding to the communicative function of language. No serious attention has been paid to the domain of private expression, corresponding to inner consciousness. As we have demonstrated, a careful examination of private expressions in Japanese reveals the invariable self-referential expression, *jibun*.

Metaphorically, the private self represented by *jibun* is the "naked" self, whereas various words of self-reference — e.g. *boku*, *watashi*, *okaasan* 'mother', and *sensei* 'teacher' — are diverse "clothes" for the private self to wear in public. Viewed in this light, the context-dependence of self assumed in the group model boils down to the context-dependence of one's clothes. It is not one's individual self as such, but rather the clothes it dons, that varies. This variation depends on such contextual factors as the *uchi/soto* (in-group/out-group) distinction, who is talking to whom, and so on.

In this regard, it is worth pointing out that *jibun* could also be used to refer to the public self, as in the following example:

- (33) *Jibun wa sono koto ni-tsuite wa nanimo shirimasen.*
self TOP that matter about TOP anything don't.know
'I don't know anything about that matter.'

Because the polite auxiliary *masu* is used, this sentence is a public expression, presupposing the presence of an addressee. However, this is a marked use of *jibun*: it is as if the speaker appeared in public wearing no clothes. Thus, just as it is indecorous to appear naked in public, so the use of *jibun* to refer to the public self sounds peculiar. In fact, examples like (33) remind many Japanese of situations such as those in the military where soldiers are talking to their superiors or those in sports clubs where junior (= inferior) male members are talking to their senior (= superior) members. Probably in these situations it is tacitly assumed that one must show one's real self to one's superior or senior, to whom absolute loyalty is expected. Conversely, in ordinary situations there is a different tacit assumption related to politeness; viz. one should not show one's naked self in public.

It is interesting to note further that in contrast to (33), (34) sounds quite normal.

- (34) *Jibun wa sono koto ni-tsuite wa nanimo shiranai.*
self TOP that matter about TOP anything don't.know
'I don't know anything about that matter.'

This sentence is different from (33) only in that it does not contain the polite auxiliary *masu*. Because it has no addressee-oriented expressions in it, (34) is understood to be a private expression, and *jibun* sounds quite natural here.

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Since Basil Hall Chamberlain (1850-1935), Western observers have depicted Japanese national cultural traits in an "Orientalist tradition" that shares ontological assumptions about the West as the universal reference point and the other as exotic and inferior (Minear 1980:508). They have been fascinated by some seemingly exotic characteristics of Japan. Benedict (1946:2) depicted Japan as fundamentally paradoxical: "the Japanese are both aggressive and unaggressive, both militaristic and aesthetic, both insolent and polite, rigid but adaptable, submissive and resentful of being pushed around, loyal and treacherous, brave and timid, conservative and hospitable to new ways." (Today, such a statement would be useful in recognizing similarities in Western and Japanese cultures.)

While Japan's constructed unity was created by Western observers, such an imaginary community has been supported and extended by the Japanese themselves, for representation and dissemination of various ideologies and myths are necessary parts of construction of a unified nation. This strategic "Japaneseness," characterized by Miller (1982) as "self-Orientalism," maximizes national interests and minimizes individualism.

Both the West's Orientalist characterization of Japan and Japan's self-characterization tend to use the other to formulate the self and to repress the heterogeneous voices of people within the nation: those voices have been repressed through the homogenizing discourses of an imaginary "us" versus "them," although Japan is neither static nor homogenous, nor is it closed as a society (Iwabuchi 1994).

In the 1980s, researchers began casting doubt on the validity of the group model of Japanese society. They question whether the Japanese are more group-oriented and accustomed to vertical organization than are people of other societies. Do they place greater emphasis on consensus and social harmony? And do they value more deeply group membership or social solidarity? Do they have underdeveloped egos, and lack an autonomous sense of self-interest? (Befu 1980, Miller 1982, Mouer & Sugimoto 1986).

The most essential feature of self is self-awareness, which is generated and fostered through self-other interaction and the symbolic processing of information (Lebra 1992:105). Symbolic processing of information in Japanese requires a clear demarcation between the self and others. The fact that English does not make such a demarcation and thus third-person sentences like *Mom wants to go shopping*, with no evidential expressions, are permitted does not imply that English speakers have a less clear sense of the boundary between the self and others. It suggests only that the accessibility of information is less significant in English than in Japanese. On the other hand, if a language *requires* the distinction between the self and others based on the accessibility of information, it is necessary to acknowledge that such a categorization is real in the native speaker's mind. Therefore, no basis exists for an assumption that the Japanese have a less-developed concept of self than do Westerners.

In this article, we have examined whether the notion of Japanese self as encoded in the Japanese language is relational and inseparable from the collective concept of *uchi* 'in-group', as assumed in the group model of Japanese society. While the *uchi-soto* distinction plays a significant role in accounting for such linguistic phenomena as addressing and kinship terms, honorific and polite expressions, and donatory verbs, it does not guarantee that the Japanese self is fluid and constantly shifting according to the situation. By observing psych predicates in Japanese, we have demonstrated that the notion of absolute self is deeply encoded in the language, and further, that the self-other distinction has priority over the in-group-out-group distinction.

The absolute self is the self whose mental states the speaker has direct access to, i.e. the speaker as the center of locutionary subjectivity, and thus is likely to be a universal concept applicable to all languages. We have argued that the speaker as a universal concept of self has two aspects, public and private self, and that this distinction is crucial to the analysis of the Japanese self. The group model pays attention only to public expressions involving social and interpersonal relations. It was shown that in order to see the essential nature of the Japanese and their language, it is critical that private expressions also be examined.

As we have shown in this article, the linguistic phenomena concerning psych predicates and the private self are at the core of the Japanese language. But the investigation of these phenomena provides no evidence to support the view that the Japanese are collectivistic. On the contrary, the images of the Japanese that emerge from our linguistic investigation are of individual beings who, rather than being collectivistic, are separate from each other, each with an inner self-consciousness.

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