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Honorific Registers

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Abstract

Several different kinds of honorific registers are known to exist in human languages. The paper presents a comparative framework for their study. The first half introduces some basic distinctions necessary for the study and analysis of such systems; the second half examines a range of cases drawn from different languages. The discussion covers such issues as: the range and type of honorific repertoires in human languages; stereotypes and ideologies of honorific value; the use of honorific expressions in interaction; the difference between explicit stereotypes and the range of effects experienced in interaction.

Keywords: honorifics, discourse, register

要旨

人間の言語には、数種類の異なる敬語のレジスター（使用域）が存在することが知られている。本論考は、その比較研究のための枠組みを提示するものである。論考の前半では、そのようなシステムの研究と分析に欠かせない幾つかの基本的な区分・分類方法を紹介し、後半では異なる言語からさまざまな事例を検証する。この論考では、人間言語における敬語体系の幅とその種類、敬意的価値のステレオタイプとイデオロギー、相互交渉における敬語使用、明示的なステレオタイプと相互交渉で経験されるその効果領域などを考察の対象に含む。

キーワード：敬語、談話、レジスター（使用域）

1. Introduction

An honorific register is a system of linguistic signs linked by their users to stereotypes of honor or respect. In any language a number of linguistic expressions are stereotypically valued as honorific forms, whether in positive or negative terms.¹ Languages differ in the degree of elaboration of honorific repertoires and the range of stereotypic values associated with their use. In any language community all speakers do not employ honorific forms in the same

manner; these differences are often grasped in stereotypes of speaker distinction (viz., class, level of education, etc.).

Common encounters with stereotypes are cases where language users typify particular expressions *as* honorific, describe norms of appropriate use, link usage to deference effects, or evaluate variation-in-use as emblematic of social identity of speaker. Such evaluations formulate metapragmatic models of the effects of speaking. They associate language use with several distinct effects such as the expression of deference, the recognition of another's status, or the display of speaker's own status. Since such effects are linked to each other the folk-models in question are internally motivated to a degree. Some among these models become institutionally dominant in society as standards of respectful—and respectable—behavior.

The study of registers requires attention to reflexive social processes through which forms of utterances are linked to metapragmatic models of this kind. Although these processes are dialectical and sociohistorical in character the models they yield often appear 'natural' to the language user. Even aside from the regimenting force of institutions such models permit a degree of folk-rationalizability. Thus different indexical effects that appear to motivate each other may be used to rationalize each other in the culture-internal perspective of the language user (Agha 1998). In many societies, for instance, the tendency to speak respectfully to others is stereotypically revalorized as an index of the respectability of self; in such cases language users may *justify* their tendency to employ other-respectful speech by appeal to the mantle of their own respectability. Here the speech pattern is more than a counter in the game of other-deference; it is valued as a commodity that must be possessed and, once possessed, displayed as often as possible, such displays themselves constituting significant moves in the second-order game of self-presentation.

Before we turn to these issues in more detail let us consider some basic questions about honorific lexemes and their use in utterances.

1.1. Honorific lexemes and repertoires

Linguists rely on stereotypes of use in identifying honorific lexemes² and in grouping them into isofunctional pragmatic repertoires. A

cross-linguistic comparison of repertoires shows that honorific registers differ typologically in a number of characteristics such as **repertoire size** (number of lexemes), **structure** (grammatical formation) and **lexeme range** (number of form-classes in which lexemes occur).³ If a language contains honorific forms of many types (e.g., nouns, verbs and adjectives) multiple honorific lexemes can co-occur in utterances. Such lexeme co-occurrence has important consequences for honorific discourse in that language, e.g., simultaneous deference to several individuals, valorization of speech levels, and other forms of indexical stratification discussed below. In most (if not all) languages stereotypes of honorific sign-value are extended from linguistic expressions to non-linguistic signs as well (such as gesture, prosody, bodily comportment) which frequently co-occur with linguistic signs to yield composite effects in interaction. Honorific repertoires thus differ typologically in their **semiotic range** as well, i.e., in the range of linguistic and non-linguistic signs to which honorific values are ascribed.

1.2. Textuality

A repertoire perspective on registers provides an initial entry into their study but is inherently incomplete. Honorific lexemes (or other individuable signs) are of little practical utility to the language user since they are neither deployed nor encountered as isolated signs in events of interaction. They are relevant to social interaction only under conditions of **textuality** (co-occurrence) with other signs. The range of effects—and social relations—that are enactable under these conditions is much larger than the range of functions reportable by language users in explicit stereotypes of use. For instance, the actual use of honorific forms serves many interactional agendas such as control and domination, irony, innuendo, masked aggression, and other types of socially meaningful behaviors that ideologies of honor and respect do not describe; yet the common-sense stereotype that these forms are 'honorific' in value nonetheless shapes default perceptions of their social relevance. Why should this be so?

The utterance of an honorific lexeme is invariably part of a larger semiotic display in which various **textually composite effects** can be recognized in interaction; all of these are not equally transparent to decontextualized reports of language use. Thus, un-

der conditions of textuality, the effects of co-occurring signs may be consistent with a form's stereotypic indexical force, or may strengthen it (yielding greater politeness than the form alone could achieve), or be at odds with it in some measure, partly canceling its polite force. All three types of effects—consistency, augmentation, and partial cancellation (defeasibility)—involve text-in-co(n)text relationships that are only recognizable given a particular lexeme as a zero-point of reckoning (i.e., as a form-element whose co-text is now at issue) and a model of lexeme indexicality as a criterion (i.e., as an effect potentially evaluable for consistency, augmentation or cancellation from co-text). Language users have little trouble recognizing all three types of composite effects under conditions of textuality, where the total text-configuration—an utterance-in-co(n)text—is the object of metapragmatic evaluation and response. However, in acts of decontextualized reflection about language (where lexemes rather than text-configurations are the typical objects of scrutiny) composite effects that are contrary to stereotype are less transparent to native description and report. Thus for any honorific system the class of enactable effects is in principle larger than the class of explicit stereotypes of use.

An honorific register is a folk-model of action in this sense, a model that links a repertoire of enactable (pragmatic) signs to stereotypic effects. For any honorific register, the formulation of stereotypes of use is an ongoing social practice that takes many forms (see Agha 1994, 1998). For a given class of honorific signs more than one such model can, in principle, co-exist in a society (e.g., for different sub-groups of speakers); in practice, however, some among these models may achieve **institutional dominance** over others (through a variety of processes discussed below) and come to function as official systems of normativity.

Let us begin, however, with a simpler question: How can even one such model be identified by the analyst?

2. Metapragmatic stereotypes

When linguists and anthropologists identify honorific registers in languages the method of discovery requires systematic attention to metapragmatic typifications of speech by native speakers. These data allow the analyst to differentiate honorific repertoires from the rest of the language, to formulate hypotheses about their ap-

propriate use, and to identify honorific forms in utterances. Once identified, the use of honorific forms can be shown to yield additional effects that are not explicitly described by natives, as noted above. However all forms of register study take the data of native metapragmatic typifications as a point of departure.

- (1) Metapragmatic typifications of speech include cases where native speakers typify the pragmatic value of particular expressions, viz.,
 - (a) classify expressions in terms of honorific value (e.g., that one expression is 'respect'-ful, another is not);
 - (b) specify the appropriate use of expressions (e.g., that an expression is used to address high status persons);
 - (c) evaluate variation in use as emblematic of speaker type (viz. images of speaker class, education, age, gender and the like).

Stereotypes are socially regular typifications of the enactable effects of speech. To speak of **metapragmatic stereotypes** is simply to say that social regularities of metapragmatic typification can be observed and documented as data. The simplest kind of social regularity takes the following form: many persons identify a form as honorific and typify its use in comparable ways. Other, more complex and sociologically interesting cases are discussed below (see, e.g., Table 4ff.).

2.1. The data of stereotypes

From an empirical standpoint metapragmatic stereotypes are not ideas in the head. Indeed the main evidence for their existence lies in overt (publicly perceivable) behavior that evaluates the pragmatic properties of linguistic expressions. Such data is generally unusable without further internal analysis of the following features: the degree of **explicitness** with which it typifies forms and values; the particular **indexical** effects for which it evaluates forms (e.g., deference to addressee, refinement of speaker); the **replicability** of a given typification by social category of informants; the **normative hegemony** of a particular class of stereotype judgments. I discuss these issues with many examples below. Let me begin with a discussion of the issue of explicitness.

Though necessarily **overt** (perceivable), metapragmatic behavior may be denotationally explicit or implicit with respect to the properties typified. In the most explicit cases such behavior de-

scribes the indexical values noted in (1) above. Linguists frequently rely on accounts of (1a) in the very identification of a register's forms. Although some honorific expressions in every language have distinctive grammatical markers, every language also contains honorific forms that carry no overt morphemic mark identifying them as such. Consequently the only *general* method of identification available to the linguist is one which relies on the native speaker's metalinguistic ability to differentiate honorific expressions from the rest of the language. Empirically, the linguist has identified an honorific repertoire when he or she is able to partition the total lexicon of the language into honorific and non-honorific forms in a way consistent with native metapragmatic evaluations. If the linguist is a native speaker of the language such evaluative judgments may be available as 'native speaker intuitions'. In the more general case (e.g., fieldwork in an unfamiliar language) the activity of sorting expressions into isofunctional pragmatic repertoires relies on field queries employing native metapragmatic terms such as those in Table 1, (a); such distinctions are also recoverable in some cases from normative traditions of lexicography and grammarology that employ such terms.

Table 1. Metapragmatic data used in the study of honorific registers

- (a) Native terms that name discrete repertoires
- Zulu: *hlonipha* 'respect'
 - Guugu-Yimidhirr: *Guugu-Dhabul* 'forbidden words'
 - Tibetan: *s'esa* 'respect; respectful speech, behavior'
 - Samoa: *upu fa'aaloalo* 'respectful words'
 - Japanese: *kei-go* 'respect language'; *sonkei-go* 'honoring language'; *kenjoo-go* 'humble language'; *teinei-go* 'polite language'
 - Javanese: *ngoko* 'speech; the language'; *madya* 'middle(-polite)'; *krama* 'polite speech, behavior'; *krama inggil* 'high polite'; *krama andhap* 'humble polite'; *basa* 'language, polite language'; *tata-krama* 'politesse, polite conduct, politeness in conduct'
- (b) Explicit stereotypes of use, e.g., standards of 'appropriate' use:
- Simple generic types: 'X marks respect to people you're talking to'; 'X is used for talking to superiors/inferiors'; 'X is used for talking to elders/parents; etc.
 - More elaborate narrated scenarios (Bengali, Das 1968: 20): "The inferior form *tui* is generally used by superiors to youngsters, between intimate friends, in certain families reciprocally by brothers and sisters and by a master to his servant...."

- Elicited judgments gathered through questionnaires
 - Normative statements in native grammatological and lexicographic traditions
- (c) Implicit metapragmatic data
- Patterns of next-turn response behavior
 - Patterns of ratified vs. unrated use
 - Patterns of symmetric vs. asymmetric exchange of forms

Hypotheses about the functions of honorific forms are commonly based (at least in part) on native stereotypes of use, as in (b). Such accounts frequently take an expression, X, and predicate something of it; the predicate may employ a term from the set in (a), ('is polite,' 'marks respect') or employ status designators ('elders,' 'parents,' 'friends,' 'intimates,' etc.) to typify scenarios of usage. Such accounts occur naturally in most field situations but are easily elicited as well. The use of questionnaires and interviews has been a common method for systematic elicitation of stereotypes of use since the work of Brown and Gilman 1960. Although the data gathered by these methods is often called the data of 'use,' the term is a misnomer; such data documents reportable stereotypes of use, not acts of actual usage themselves. Questionnaires are particular valuable as sources of data on stereotypes of use since they gather a corpus of metapragmatic typifications for a sample of consultants; insofar as the demographic profile of each consultant is known such techniques provide a basis for assessing the social distribution of stereotypes of use across a population of speakers (see, for example, Ogino et al. 1985).

The study of actual usage requires observations of 'natural' discourse; any data gathered by such means may or may not be consistent with explicit stereotypes for reasons discussed earlier in the paper. Studies of contextualized use of honorifics attend to the more implicitly metapragmatic evaluations in (c). Naturally occurring response behaviors, such as next-turn behaviors, discriminate the pragmatic values of expressions by treating different expressions with different responses; these behaviors evaluate pragmatic signs for indexical effects though they do not describe what they evaluate. Such data are often used to formulate and test (and thus to modify and improve) hypotheses about the functions of honorific forms.

2.2. Stereotypes and socialization

Metapragmatic typifications of speech become available to linguists as diagnostic criteria on registers precisely because they are available to native speakers as means of communicating judgments of pragmatic value. Many of the kinds of 'data' listed in Table 1 (such as typifications of lexemes, injunctions about appropriate use) are also encountered by language users in everyday life; others (such as lexicographic and grammatological treatments of the register) are encountered in more specialized institutional settings such as schooling. Such typifications of speech play a critical role in shaping an individual's competence over registers and, indeed, in extending such competence over demographic categories of persons.

Since the collection of individuals that we call a society is constantly changing in demographic composition (due to births, deaths and migrations, for example) *the continuous historical existence* of an honorific register depends upon mechanisms for the replication of the register's forms and values over changing populations (e.g., from generation to generation). This effect is achieved in different ways in different societies. Prescriptive socialization within the family plays some role in most societies. In societies with written scripts and mass literacy, normative public institutions—such as schooling, traditions of lexicography, language standardization, and the like—serve as loci of public sphere legitimation and replication of register stereotypes over segments of the population. When effective, such methods may result in the growth or rise of a register formation in society by extending a more or less uniform competence in a prestige register over relatively large segments of the population.

Yet such processes and projects are inevitably constrained by principles which limit the participatory access of individuals to normative traditions (e.g., the class position of one's family, access to literacy, elite schools). In practice register stereotypes and standards are never replicated perfectly over a population of speakers. Facts of variation in register use and competence (whether deriving from, or independent of such institutionalized social projects) are themselves subject to functional reanalysis within societies yielding stereotypes of speaker kind, including emblems of status distinction among speakers.

In the case of highly institutionalized registers many social categories of persons (e.g., persons of different classes, age groups, geographic provenance) typify a register's forms and values in comparable ways. To speak of stereotypes is to speak of such socially regular or recurrent typifications. Thus the notion of stereotype necessarily involves a **social domain** assumption, namely that comparable metapragmatic typifications can be gathered over some population of speakers. The assumption that a register's forms and values are modeled symmetrically by all speakers (i.e. all members of a language community) is often a default assumption in many works in the literature. But the extent and degree of uniformity is always an empirical question that requires systematic study in each case.

There are several empirical methods by which we can show that register stereotypes have an asymmetric distribution within a language community (e.g., are not invariant for all speakers). The logical basis of these methods is as follows: Since the only evidence for metapragmatic stereotypes is overt (publicly perceivable) evaluative behavior, the question of the social provenance of a particular model can only be settled by asking which categories of respondents offer which kinds of judgments. Any given native speaker's 'intuitions' about honorific usage inevitably reflects a socially positioned perspective on the register. If the individual is socialized to the institutionally dominant form of the register, the model evidenced in his or her judgments, while socially positioned, may in fact have a very wide social domain, i.e., may also be evidenced in the metapragmatic judgments of many individuals, and may even reflect an institutionally legitimated or official 'position' on the register.

2.3. Stereotypes and ideology

To say that stereotypes of register form and value exist is merely to say that socially regular patterns of metapragmatic typification can be observed and documented as data. Such models are not 'false' or 'incorrect' in any definitional sense. The question of whether a system of stereotypes is ideological—in the sense of 'distorting'—is empirically undecidable if an order of internally-consistent stereotypes is viewed in isolation from all other observable facts.

Yet register systems are invariably found to be ideological formations—in several senses—when subjected to further kinds of empirical analysis. I observed in section 2.1 that the activity of formulating and testing hypotheses about stereotypes of indexicality employs many kinds of data. *There is no necessity that the results of these data should be wholly consistent with each other for all speakers.* Indeed the logical basis of the claim that some order of stereotypes is ideological is that two sets of metapragmatic data imply the existence of distinct models. I now describe a few varieties of ideological distortion that are very common in languages of the world. I turn to ethnographic examples in the next section.

The first type of case involves the ideological character of **competing valorizations**: In so far as register systems vary society-internally particular socially positioned models may contrast with each other as alternative systems of normativity. Each is ideological from the perspective of the other in so far as it gets the (normative) facts incorrect. Why do competing models of normativity co-exist in societies? Two kinds of reasons are very common. The first is merely a result of the asymmetries of replication noted above: individuals differ in their access to institutions through which register competence is reproduced over historical populations (e.g., some are born in elite families, attend elite schools; others lack these opportunities). Another reason is that systems of normative value invariably serve the interests of some speakers, not others; they are therefore subject to manipulation, differential allegiance, and society-internal competition. These factors often play a critical role in the sociohistorical transformation of register systems.

A second ideological aspect of registers derives from the open-ended possibilities of **functional reanalysis**: Registers are open cultural systems in the sense that once a distinct register is culturally recognized as existing within a language, its repertoires are susceptible to further reanalysis and change. For example when prestige registers spoken by privileged groups are emulated by others they are often perceived as 'devalued' by their erstwhile speakers, leading to hyperlectal innovations in prestige forms. In the case of repertoires of youth slang (which change very rapidly) competence over 'current' repertoires is frequently reanalyzed as a system of inter-generational positioning. Every such reanalysis is a

'distortion' of a prior stage of the register system that now constitutes a new system of enactable values. Such functional reanalyses often co-exist synchronically within societies as well, and may contribute to systems of competing valorization—alternative models of normativity—in the sense noted above.

A third reason that stereotypes have an ideological character is that stereotype judgments typically underdifferentiate the semiotic orders of **lexeme** and **text** as I noted earlier. Native judgments about honorific systems are often formulated as models of the pragmatic values of isolable words and expressions (e.g., that some words are inherently polite, some not). But since honorific lexemes are never experienced in isolation from other signs in interaction, the effects of co-textual signs (i.e., signs co-occurring with the lexeme) may on a given occasion of use either be congruent with or, by degrees, may cancel the stereotypic effects of the lexeme in question (see 1.2). Honorific discourse can thus be manipulated interactionally to achieve effects which—though dependent on the stereotypic values of particular lexemes—are, at the level of text, significantly at odds with such values (e.g., the use of honorific language to enact veiled aggression where the presence of stereotypically honorific lexemes counts as the 'veiling'; see also Table 8 below). The fact that honorific expressions are used in acts of aggression, rudeness, coercion and hostility in every known society can come as a surprise only to someone who fails to distinguish a metapragmatic model of action (e.g., that some isolable lexeme is stereotypically 'honorific') from the co(n)textual effects of a pragmatic utterance (which are always textually composite effects).⁴ Such an ideological stance is common enough in native speaker *accounts* of their language—especially accounts of decontextualized pieces of language, such as lexemes—but absent in the lived experience of anyone who practically grasps the use of an honorific system.

A fourth issue concerns the way in which register stereotypes involve the **personification** of speech and associated signs. A pragmatic sign is effectively personified when stereotype judgments associate the use of the sign with an image of personhood; under these conditions the deployment of the sign in usage can summon up or index a particular speaker persona for all interlocutors familiar with the stereotype. Such personifications of speech often result from a functional reanalysis of perceived variation in

use resulting in the co-existence of distinct 'orders of indexicality' (Silverstein 1996), generally linked to partially overlapping signs in utterance. The study of register personifications requires attention to several factors (see Agha 1998) but two kinds of processes are of very general relevance. The first is a type of functional 'leakage' across objects of typification: native terms used to typify lexemes are commonly used to typify other accompanying signs (viz., prosodic patterns, systems of speech-level; see 7.0 and 8.0 below), each of which is susceptible to evaluations for variation in use. The second process, personification properly so-called, associates variation in the use of particular classes of signs with characterological assessments. Thus many languages have *isolable lexemes* that are stereotypically viewed as *addressee-honorifics* (e.g., Japanese verb suffix *-mas*); but certain *configurative text-patterns* of usage (e.g., a speaker's tendency habitually to use *-mas* under appropriate conditions) is revalorized as indexical of speaker's attributes (cf. 'discernment', Cook 1999). I discuss several similar cases below.

A fifth type of case—a special case of competing valorizations in the sense discussed above—involves **partial fractionation** of stereotype values linked to a form. In a common type of case, the social domain of speakers who formulate comparable stereotypes about one object of metasemiosis (whether a lexeme is honorific or not; cf. (1a) above) can be divided into two or more sub-groups with respect to the stereotypic treatment of a second, linked, object of metasemiosis (such as standards of lexeme usage; cf. (1b) above); for instance, many speakers may agree that a particular expression is honorific but give different accounts of the conditions of its appropriate use. These differences are frequently systematic as well and are sometimes demonstrably linked to larger social processes connecting the groups involved. This point is illustrated through several examples below (see section 3.2).

3. Pronominal registers

I turn now to a discussion of a range of examples. I observed earlier that honorific registers differ in repertoire characteristics (such as size, structure and range of forms). I begin with a structurally simple class of honorific registers, consisting of alternations of pronouns. In the simplest case the honorific repertoire consists of a single lexeme.

3.1. Functional reanalysis and repertoire size

Starting with the data of interviews and questionnaires (see Brown and Gilman 1960; also Table 1 ff. above) it is easy to document the fact that speakers of French view the second person pronoun *vous* as a polite word and *tu* as not polite, and that speakers of Russian, German and Italian report the existence of analogous pronominal distinctions; the stereotypically honorific forms are listed in the column labeled 'H' in Table 2. If we compare these reports to the data of contextualized use we get a slightly different result: In actual usage the 2nd person pronoun *vous* varies between a 'polite singular' construal and a 'plural' construal (which is not specifically polite); each form listed in column H analogously permits more than one contextualized construal as shown in the table.

Table 2. Pronominal registers in European languages *

	NH	H	construal ₁	construal ₂
French	<i>tu</i> '2 nd sg.'	<i>vous</i>	'2 nd sg. polite' /	'2 nd pl.'
Russian	<i>ty</i> '2 nd sg.'	<i>vy</i>	'2 nd sg. polite' /	'2 nd pl.'
German	<i>du</i> '2 nd sg.'	<i>Sie</i>	'2 nd sg. polite' /	'3 rd pl.'
Italian	<i>tu</i> '2 nd sg.'	<i>Lei</i>	'2 nd sg. polite' /	'3 rd sg. fem.'

NH = non-honorific lexeme; H = honorific lexeme

Since the word-form *vous* permits both a singular-polite and a plural construal, how is a politeness effect ever established? Only if singular reference is fixed from co(n)text can a token of *vous* be understood as 'polite'. This is commonly achieved by co-textual cues, such as number marking in the predicate (see Comrie 1975).⁵

(a/a') *vous êtes* {venu / venus}

'You {sg.HON / pl.} have come'

(b/b') *vous êtes* {loyal / loyaux}

'You {sg. HON / pl.} are loyal'

Thus when French speakers encounter discourse tokens like the above, predicate number marking fixes numerosity of referent and deference effects. Interlocutors view the singular text-tokens (a, b)—but not the plural tokens (a', b')—as specifically polite.

Hence if we attend to implicit stereotypes—social regularities of next turn evaluative response—the term 'polite singular' actually names a text-pattern (linked to tokens of *vous* in a and b), not

a word-form (since tokens of *vous* in a' and b' are not treated as polite). Yet from the standpoint of explicit stereotypes the view that 'vous is a polite word' is an established social fact, readily agreed to by speakers of the language. The deference effect (politeness) is manifest when a given denotational effect (singular reference) occurs; formally the effect is implemented not by a pronoun but by a text-configuration containing the pronoun (e.g., pronoun plus number marking). Yet folk-consciousness metonymically attributes the significance of the text-configuration to a text-segment and essentializes such effects as the stereotypic meaning of the lexeme.⁶

In such cases *textually implemented* differences in reference are reanalyzed as facts about *lexemic* contrasts of deference. Given the reanalysis, the differences of construal noted in Table 2 are perceived as a series of number and person tropes. Normative traditions tend to stabilize such tropes, formulating new standards of use linked to the use of particular expressions.

Contemporary European languages exhibit relatively simple registers of this kind, though this is evidently a recent phenomenon.⁷ In many Asian languages (such as Tibetan, Japanese, Vietnamese, Javanese, Thai) pronominal registers are far more elaborate by criteria of repertoire size. But the increase in size of repertoire is just the result of a number of lexicalized tropes co-existing at a particular synchronic stage of the language. For example, Chandrasekhar (1970, 1977) lists over a dozen second person pronouns in Malayalam. Of these *ñiññal* and *tañkaḷ* in (a), formed from the plural suffix (-*kaḷ*), are based on number tropes. The other cases involve person tropes of various kinds. The forms in (b) are all common nouns meaning 'master' which, when used to refer to addressee, merge functionally with pronouns. The forms in (c) are honorific nominals of various kinds which permit both second and third person honorific usage, i.e., deference to addressee or anaphor. The deictic adverbs in (d) exhibit a similar range of second and third person uses in addition to their ordinary use as spatial deictics. Thus all of the expressions in (b)-(d) permit deference to addressee-referent but have other construals as well; they are analogous to second person pronouns only by criteria of partial overlap of function.

Since these kinds of systems are based on the reanalysis of form-classes, it is evident that the term 'pronoun' cannot be used in

any precise way to describe such expressions. In the case of elaborate pronominal registers (e.g., Thai, Tibetan, Japanese) we find a range of **person referring honorific forms** which overlap with true pronouns (i.e. participant deictics) by formal (distributional) and functional (referential) criteria. A variety of nominal expressions—nouns, titles, kinterms, body-part terms, spatial deictics—are reanalyzed in this way and come to function as pronoun-like honorific lexemes.

Table 3. Malayalam honorific 'pronouns'

Form	Range of construals		
	addressee reference	anaphoric reference	other
(a) <i>ñi / tān</i>	'you (sg)'	—	—
<i>ñiññal</i>	'you (pl./sg.HON)'	—	—
<i>tañkaḷ</i>	'you (sg.HON)'	—	—
(b) <i>svāmi</i>	'you (HON.)'	—	'master'
<i>ēmānan</i>	'you (HON.)'	—	'master'
<i>yajamānan</i>	'you (HON.)'	—	'master'
(c) <i>tiru-mēni</i>	'you (HON.)'	's/he (HON.)'	'auspicious-body'
<i>tiru-manassa</i>	'you (HON.)'	's/he (HON.)'	'auspicious-mind'
<i>tam-purān</i>	'you (HON.)'	's/he (HON.)'	'one's.own-lord'
(d) <i>aviṭuñña</i>	'you (HON.)'	's/he (HON.)'	'from there'
<i>iviṭuñña</i>	'you (HON.)'	's/he (HON.)'	'from here'
<i>añṇuñña</i>	'you (HON.)'	's/he (HON.)'	'from there'
<i>añṇatta</i>	'you (HON.)'	's/he (HON.)'	'from there'

(Source: Chandrasekhar 1970, 1977)

In languages where lexicogrammatical honorifics involve many more form-classes, honorific repertoires exhibit greater lexeme range (viz., include common nouns, verbs, etc.; see Table 7); the focus of deference also varies by form-class. I return to these issues in section 5.0.

3.2. Stereotypes of use and users

The elaboration of stereotypes of use and users is quite independent of questions of repertoire size. Even in French, where a single polite pronoun is recognized there are important society-internal differences in standards of use. To take one example, Janet Morford shows that using *vous* for one's parents is stereotypically viewed as an upper class standard—a fact readily described in metapragmatic narratives offered by working class speakers. This emblem of class identity—having your children say *vous* to you—is readily grasped by upper class speakers as well, and is subject to strategic manipulation and control. One upper-class politician reputedly asked his children to switch from *vous* to *tu* in addressing him in public, thus seeking to perform a more demotic image of his own origins in the electoral process (Morford 1997). Similar differences in standards of use have been described in elaborate detail for Swedish pronominal usage as well (Paulston 1976). They are mentioned in passing in almost every study of pronominal registers. What kind of variation is this?

It will be evident, first, that we are dealing primarily with stereotypes of use, not with acts of usage. Acts of usage may well conform to stereotypes, or be strategically transformed through an awareness of the stereotype. A second issue is that the stereotypes in question are not stereotypes of lexemes but of patterns of interactional text that contain lexemic tokens. The phrase 'using *vous* for one's parents' describes a textualized scenario of interaction in which a pronominal form is exchanged by persons occupying specific interactional roles; to recognize the act requires the ability to recognize or 'read' facts of role inhabitance (that addressee is speaker's parent) from the semiotic co-text of the pronominal token. The stereotype treats the entire (multi-modal) text-configuration as an object of metasemiotic scrutiny and typification, evaluating it as an index of the upper class status of interlocutors. The pattern of usage has now become an emblem of social personhood, one that can be inhabited in interaction (through its display) or strategically avoided (as in the case of the French politician above).

A parallel example is reported in Swedish by Paulston 1976. In the period in which the study was conducted (ca. 1970), the polite pronoun *ni* was already undergoing reanalysis, and was replaced increasingly by informal *du* in many social contexts. In address

among strangers, the use of *ni* still remained the norm for older, upper-class speakers; the use of *du* in this setting was expanding but associated largely with younger speakers. Awareness of the stereotype allowed a range of interactional tropes, such as the following: "Even some 70-year-old-upper-class ladies find it agreeable to be addressed as *du* in the street; they say it makes them feel younger" (1976: 367). The capacity of the usage to make someone "feel younger" is a direct consequence of the existence of a culture-internal stereotype (associating *du* usage with younger speakers). The stereotype provides a framework for evaluating the unexpected usage and yields the trope of identity as a performed effect.

The reanalysis of variation in use into stereotypes of social persona frequently reflects facts of group-relative positioning that reveal something of the larger social processes that connect groups to each other. The case of Egyptian Arabic, as reported by Alrabaa 1985, is particularly instructive in this regard. Alrabaa's study is a questionnaire-based investigation of metapragmatic stereotypes of use associated with the informal and solidary pronouns *inta / inti* 'you (m./f.)' and the more formal pronouns *ḥaḍritak / ḥaḍritik* 'you (m./f.); polite'.

Table 4. Egyptian Arabic: Positional stereotypes of self and other

	Group1: Upper-class youths	Group2: Lower-class youths
Stereotype of self-report	claim to use solidary <i>inta / inti</i> forms	claim greater use of the formal <i>ḥaḍritak / ḥaḍritik</i> pronouns
Stereotype of others' usage	say that lower class speakers use the <i>inta / inti</i> forms	say that upper/middle class speakers use the <i>ḥaḍritak / ḥaḍritik</i> forms
Ideological positioning:	egalitarian (self-lowering)	stratificational (self-raising)

(Source: Alrabaa 1985)

At the level of stereotypes of speakers, upper-class and lower-class youths offer different models of usage that are, moreover, mirror images of each other. Upper-class youths claim to use the 'solidary' forms, which they believe lower-class speakers to use; and lower-

class speakers lay claim to more 'formal' usage, which they perceive as upper/middle class. A comparison of stereotypes of self and other usage thus reveals that each social group ideologically formulates a self-positioning modeled on perceptions of the other. Upper-class youths are motivated by an ideology of egalitarianism to adopt what they perceive as "the system of 'the people' (*al-sha'b*). Lower-class users are motivated by a more stratificational ideology, an emulation of "what they presume to be the middle-class values" (Alrabaa 1985: 649).

Such aspirations to persona and personhood are mediated by larger sociocultural process through which individuals become acquainted with social personae linked to speech. A particularly important source of such folk stereotypes in modern societies is the circulation of metapragmatic representations of speech and speakers in genres of public sphere discourses, including the mass media. Alrabaa gives us a glimpse of the processes relevant to the Egyptian case: "In off-the-record comments during our interviews, both older and younger upper-class informants did often express a conviction that lower-class informants would be 'looser,' less formal, etc. This upper-class belief is also reflected in many movies and television comedies, which frequently present a stereotype of the bawdy, raucous lower-class character who addresses all listeners as *inta / inti* = [German] *Du*, [French] *tu*." (p. 648).

Once we begin to consider such processes in comparative terms it is evident that many kinds of structural features of language are treated cross-linguistically as stereotypically "social" indexicals, i.e., as indexing speaker's social identity and relationship to others. Pronominal registers are just one particular structural type. It is evident also that the processes of stereotype formation, functional reanalysis and stereotype extension discussed above apply to many kinds of structural repertoires. We can make little sense of these comparative data by supposing that a particular structural type 'encodes' some particular kind of social relation or identity. In all cases, an analysis of stereotypic values requires attention to social regularities of metapragmatic evaluation; an understanding of enactable effects requires attention to emergent text-in-context relationships. Let us consider these issues for a rather distinct class of register formations.

4. Phonolexical registers

I turn now to a class of cases where repertoire differentiation depends on phonolexical contrasts among forms. Such cases emerge when phonological alternations operate over specific lexical domains to generate alternate forms of a word. Variation in use is evaluated metapragmatically as indexical of features of the immediate participation framework (speaker type, relation to addressee, type of setting and so on). These systems are 'honorific' in the sense they involve images of speaker, including stereotypes of speaker-decorum and respectability; they are not always linked robustly to ideologies of other-deference, however (see n. 1).

The Samoan case in Table 5 involves phonolexical contrasts primarily linked to variation between alveolar and velar consonants. This structural fact tells us nothing about the social consequences of using one form of speech or another. To understand these issues requires attention to metapragmatic stereotypes of enactable effect.

Table 5. Good and bad speech in Samoan

	<i>tautala lelei</i> 'good speech'	<i>tautala leaga</i> 'bad speech'	Phonological alternations
'chief, orator'	matai	makai	t ~ k
'village council meeting'	fono	foŋo	n ~ ŋ
'highness (cf. your highness)'	tofa	kofa	t ~ k

(Source: Duranti 1992)

The metapragmatic terms *tautala lelei* 'good speech' and *tautala leaga* 'bad speech' provide some initial clues to the scheme of valorization linked to performance and use. However norms of appropriate use provide a somewhat fuller picture. So-called 'good speech' is viewed as appropriate to writing, education and Christianity; its use is associated with non-traditional (Western) formal settings such as Church services. In contrast 'bad speech' is appropriate to everyday informal settings (in homes, at the store, on the road) but also to 'traditional' formal settings such as speechmaking. Now the very fact that the term 'bad speech' is used to describe forms used in *traditional* speech-making suggests something of the

institutional centering of these metapragmatic typifications and norms. The judgments themselves are positionally centered with respect to the forces of modernity and Westernization that formulate emblems of personhood linked to variation in speech behavior. The repertoire in Table 5 involves stereotypes of speaker decorum; but no robust ideology of other-deference appears to be linked to these forms.

The Persian example in Table 6 involve phonolexical contrasts that are primarily treated as indices of speaker demeanor but are also extended to stereotypes of speaker-addressee relations. From a structural standpoint, the shift from style A to style B (the terms are Beeman's) is marked by phonological reductions (deletion, devoicing, and others) that operate in particular syllabic environments (for a discussion of criterial environments see Beeman 1986, ch. 5). One important source of these phonolexical contrasts is the difference between Arabic and Persian patterns of syllable structure. Persian has a large number of borrowed Arabic words. Style A lexemes partially preserve the phonemic and syllabic structure of the source language; in style B, these contrasts are reduced and Persianized. The contrast between styles A and B is treated metapragmatically as indexical of speaker demeanor and relation to addressee. But seeing how this works requires attention to both the textual implementation of these lexemes and the metapragmatic stereotypes associated with their use.

Table 6. Phonolexical registers in Standard Teherani Persian

GLOSS	STYLE A	STYLE B	Phonological alternations
1. after pious	bæ:'d mo:'men	bæ:d momen	/l/ ~ ø
2. fish	ma:hi:	ma:i	/h/ ~ ø
3. morning patience	sobh sæbR	sob sæb	/r/ ~ ø
4. how	çetor	çeto	
5. celebration	jæ:šN	jæš	nasal ~ ø
name	e:sM	es	
6. difficult	sæ:xt	sæx	stop ~ ø
more lexemes of Arabic etymology		more Persian etyma; 'Persianization' of Arabic phonolexical structure	

(Source: Beeman 1986)

At the level of text, the varieties that Beeman calls Style A and Style B are two poles, or extremes of the co-textual patterning of phonolexical shapes—consistently unreduced or consistently reduced syllables shapes, respectively—in utterances. When none of the lexemes uttered exhibit phonological reduction we have a pure example of style A; in the converse case, pure style B. Between these two extremes lies a gradable continuum of possibilities.

At the level of metapragmatic stereotypes, style A is typified by language users as exhibiting 'proper' demeanor on the part of speaker and, derivatively, as exhibiting deference to interlocutors. One layer of the sense of propriety is motivated by the fact that the style consists of the normatively correct shapes of words (as these are preserved, for example, in the orthography) and style B of phonolexical shapes that appear *reduced* to intuitions trained by graphemic conventions. But the contrast of propriety and impropriety is also typified—(re)analyzed, we might say—in more explicitly characterological terms: style A is associated with the ethic of kæm-ru'i 'restricted expression' and style B with por-ru'i 'free expression'. These stereotypes treat the register as indexical of speaker persona and relation to interlocutor. There are several kinds of metapragmatic data that provide evidence for these links. For example, the use of style A is judged most appropriate to contexts where

- status asymmetry between speaker and addressee is independently at issue
- self-control is expected
- the setting is public and involves non-intimates

For many speakers such norms of appropriateness clearly function as 'standards' of proper behavior. However style B utterances may also be employed in such settings, a usage that is more highly entailing, less automatized; depending on co(n)text, the utterance may be considered rude, jocular, unseemly, or otherwise inappropriate. Such effects may of course be precisely the ones desired by the speaker; or they may be unintended consequences. But the underlying issue is that standards of appropriate utterance are equally relevant to the construal of standard upholding and standard manipulating types of utterance. In the most general case standards are merely stereotypes of appropriate behavior that function as *principles for construing contextualized acts*. Social

theorists have often assumed that standards are constraints on the form of action, but this is really just a special case. The special case occurs when the actor him- or her-self employs the stereotype as a principle for accommodating the next act to a readable co(n)text of action.

Awareness of stereotypes makes possible acts of strategic manipulation as well. Since the two styles involve phonemic (rather than merely allophonic) variation the contrast between them is relatively transparent to, and reportable by, native speakers; it appears moreover that many (if not most) speakers of the standard language can switch between reduced and unreduced forms in discourse and do so strategically. The link between performable effects and sound shape is mediated by a range of metapragmatic stereotypes, many of these articulated through a commonplace vocabulary for talking about categories of demeanor linked to etiquette. For example the terms *por-ru* 'audacious, brash' and *kæm-ru* 'reticent' are commonly used to typify speech in characterological terms, particularly in cases of deviance from expected behavior. A person is called *por-ru* (literally, 'full face') if he or she deals freely with people to the point of brashness; hence *the unexpected use of style B* in the settings in (a)-(c) is an example of *por-ru* 'brashness, audacity'. A person is called *kæm-ru* (literally, 'little face') or *forutæn* (literally, 'lowering of the body') when he or she exhibits reticence, humility and bashfulness; hence *the unexpected use of style A* in settings that are the converse of (a)-(c) (i.e. symmetric, relaxed, intimate, private settings) is judged unexpectedly decorous, as exhibiting reticence or *kæm-ru* in this sense. Such terms comprise a descriptive language for talk of contrary-to-standard behavior, and for formulating judgements about current interlocutors (e.g., calling someone 'brash'); such typifications are often used strategically to typify an interlocutor's prior speech in an effort to reshape subsequent speech style and social relations.

Observe that style A does not in any sense 'code' formal/public situations. Rather the style is simply *appropriate* to such situations insofar as they are independently recognizable as such. That is, insofar as the readable co(n)text of the utterance suggests that asymmetric-proper-nonintimate modes of relationship are already 'in play,' utterances of style A are judged to be indexically congruent with (continue to maintain) such effects. Utterances that tend

towards style B entail a gradient movement away from the pole of controlled self-expression, of politesse, and of the presentation of a mannered public persona. The mode of textual implementation of the style makes possible gradient degrees of interactional informality and non-deference. Much of the subtlety of social interaction consists of the manipulation of such stylistic contrasts to perform effects that are by degrees inappropriate to the model of co(n)text already established and, as a result, capable of reconstituting aspects of the entailed context along dimensions such as (a)-(c) above.

Intuitions of appropriate use are trained by a range of metapragmatic practices, including prescriptive socialization in families and in schooling, but also through highly implicit depictions of speech/speakers in public sphere media. Thus style A is routinely encountered in national television, religious sermons, political oratory and other types of public, ceremonial occasions; and style B in interaction with family, intimate friends, and in casual meetings with acquaintances. Exposure to such routinized forms of implicitly framed speech-in-context—including the special case of explicitly ritualistic and ceremonial routinization—is itself an important social mechanism through which awareness of register values is replicated across populations.

5. Lexicogrammatical registers

Cross-linguistically deference markers are generally viewed as means of deferring to social persons. However, no honorific expression is ever uniquely associated with a single person. In actual usage, honorific lexemes index deference to persons by virtue of the fact that such persons occupy interactional roles with respect to the current utterance. In notional terms deference effects are perceived as having the structure 'deference to somebody from somebody'; however, such 'somebodies' are identifiable in discourse only as occupants of interactional roles (e.g., speaker, addressee, referent, bystander). It is necessary, therefore, to have a general terminology for talking about the way in which honorific usage mediates social relations between role incumbents. In previous work (Agha 1993), I have used the term **focus of deference** for the interactional role category to which deference is directed, and **origo of deference** for the interactional role from which deference ema-

nates. In these terms, deference is always 'deference to [role_{focus}] from [role_{origo}]'.⁷

The phonolexical repertoires discussed above involve stereotypes of indexicality linked to the current participation framework (e.g., speaker and addressee). The lexicogrammatical repertoires to which I now turn allow an additional possibility: they are linked to referent-focal effects in discourse. Thus, using these registers, it is possible to index deference to any denotable individual—including those that are non-copresent, deceased, or not yet born—thus expanding the range of expressible social relations beyond immediate participation frameworks.

5.1. Deference to referents: text-defaults

Deference to referent is mediated by the denotational class of lexeme. Registers of this kind are well attested in a range of languages (including Japanese, Korean, Javanese, Sumbanese, Samoan, Nahuatl, Tibetan, Ladakhi, Mongolian, Persian, Urdu, and others) although languages differ considerably in repertoire size, structure and elaboration.⁸ Table 7 gives a cross-linguistic summary of the kinds of lexicogrammatical domains in which referent-focal lexemes are most commonly centered (see column I) and the kinds of indexical text-defaults associated with their use (column II).

Class (a)-(c) involve lexemic classes that are used in talk about persons. Thus semantically [+human] nouns, such as pronouns, titles and kinterms productively yield honorific alternants in languages. Their use is transparently linked to a social person, namely the person denoted by the noun; this is understood as the default focus of deference, as in (a). Verbs specified for [+animate] subjects (e.g., *come, go, eat, drink, look, throw*) are similarly linked to social persons by virtue of their semantic properties. For these verbs, shown in (b), the default focus of deference is the referent of the subject NP. Many languages also differentiate specific honorific forms for verbs of speaking and exchange (*give, tell, request, etc.*) as shown in (c). These verbs are subcategorized for [+animate] objects (whether direct or indirect objects) in their argument structure. The default focus of deference is the receiver of the action, usually the referent of the dative/accusative NP (the person to

whom something is given, the one to whom something is said, of whom a request is made, etc.). Since ditransitive verbs are subcategorized for [+animate] subjects and objects the propositional content of such verbs specifies two social persons in honorific utterances (e.g., in the case of *give*, the giver and the receiver of the thing given). For such verbs the default origo of deference (i.e. the one perceived as deferring) is the denoted actor (or referent of subject NP).⁹

Table 7. Referent-focal deference categories: a cross-linguistic approximation

I. Grammatico-semantic class		II. Pragmatic text-defaults	
Major class	Sub-classes	Origo	Focus
(a) [+human] nouns	pronouns, titles, kinterms	speaker	r. of noun
(b) [+animate] -subj verbs	verbs of cognition and corporeal activity	speaker	r. of subj NP
(c) [+animate] -obj verbs	verbs of speaking & exchange; other ditransitives and promoted transitives	r. of subj NP	r. of dat/acc NP
(d) [-animate] verbs (i.e., no animate arguments)	non-agentive verbs of physical alteration, displacement, change of state; predicable of natural elements (wind, water, etc);		-- *
(e) [-human] nouns	nouns denoting animal and plant species		-- *
(f) [-human] nouns with 'personal' denotata	nouns denoting body-parts, man made objects, personal possessions, appurtenances		(absorptive)

* not lexicalized; these classes do not productively yield honorific variants

Since grammatical categories are involved in these cases it is easily supposed that such cases involve the grammatical coding of social relations. This is a mistaken view. While grammatical structure is indeed involved, the grammatical class of the expression simply shapes the default values of deference effects. A range of

textually mediated non-default construals are also possible (see 5.2).

Since honorific expressions are used to defer to persons (not inanimate objects) lexemes that do not denote persons exhibit lexical gaps in the honorific repertoire. The most common lexical gaps are illustrated in (d) and (e): verbs that lack animate arguments and hence are not predicable of persons (verbs like *evaporate*, *fracture*, *increase*); or nouns that denote non-human referents (such as terms for types of animal, mineral, plant) do not productively yield honorific forms in referent-focal repertoires.

However the class of [-human] nouns shown in (f)—nouns that denote things associated with persons—form a systematic exception. These nouns do yield honorific forms in most of the above languages but function differently from the rest. They are highly 'absorptive' in indexical focus: the person understood as deferred to remains indeterminate except by co(n)textual association. In Tibetan for example, the use of honorific forms of words like *tea*, *hat*, *book*, *umbrella*, etc. is understood as marking deference to persons co-textually associated with the thing in question, such as the possessor or owner of the object (see Agha 1993, 1998 for more details). Since the deference focus of such forms is not transparent at the lexical level such forms are also subject to functional reanalysis to a high degree. Variation in the habitual use of such forms is typically personified—reanalyzed as a system of speaker/actor-focal demeanor indexicals—and understood as conveying something about the utterer. Thus the frequent use of such expressions is linked to stereotypes of speaker refinement and elegance (Tibetan; Agha 1998) or upper-caste status (Javanese; Errington 1988); in Japanese the class of such common nouns (bearing *o-/go-* prefixes) was once apparently used "to exalt the person who possessed the item to which the prefix was agglutinated" (Hori 1995: 174) but has now been reanalyzed into a system of speaker-focal indexicals linked inter alia to stereotypes of elegance (Hori 1995) and upper/middle class femininity (Shibamoto 1987).

5.2. Textually superposed effects

To say that deference indexicals have *categorical* deference effects is to say that honorific expressions regularly specify particular contextual variables as default foci of deference relative to co-text. If

honorific expressions were always used and construed in isolation from other signs we would expect that such *categorical* (regular) effects would function as *categorical* (exceptionless) effects. But this is not so. Categorical effects are defeasible by co-occurring signs in a variety of ways. The general principle in such cases is that the effects of a text-configuration containing honorific lexemes diverges from the categorical effect of the lexeme itself. Put differently, the expression implements its categorical effect in a local stretch of text; however the significance of accompanying signs superimposes effects distinct from the effect of the text-segment itself.

One kind of composite or textually superposed effect involves secondary foci of deference distinct from the categorical focus of the form, as shown in Table 8, (a). For example an adult who does not normally defer to a child may use a referent-focal honorific expression for that child in speaking to the child's mother. Such a usage may be understood as a trope of indirect deference to the mother but only by someone who is aware of criterial facts of role alignment holding in co(n)text (that addressee is referent's mother). Once the utterance is decontextualized from this scenario of use the secondary deference effect is no longer recoverable. Cases of transposed origo, as in Table 8, (b), are cases where the act of deference is understood as having its categorical focus of deference but the origo of deference is transposed away from the utterer. A common trope of transposition is the case where the origo of deference is transposed to another speech participant, such as addressee, thus implementing 'voiced' deference effects. This type of usage is cross-linguistically common in speaking to children (Agha 1993, Smith-Hefner 1988). In a common variant, parents will use those honorific forms in speaking to children that they expect the child to use in speaking to, or about, adults; in this case the parent speaks as the child *should* speak.

Cases of veiled aggression, hyperpoliteness, and shifts of stance and alignment in (c)-(e) are, similarly, very common in honorific usage in languages of the world. The phenomenon of reference maintenance in (f) is a direct outcome of the fact that deference is linked to reference in the class of repertoires now at issue; hence whenever utterances are denotationally elliptical (e.g., subject and object NPs are overtly absent) deference marking in the

predicate facilitates actant recoverability and topic maintenance in discourse (see Hori 1995 for a discussion of the Japanese case).

Table 8. Textually 'superposed' effects and interactional tropes

<i>Textually superposed effect</i>	<i>Criterial features of co-text</i>
(a) Secondary focus (or indirect deference): deferring to one person in order to defer to another	role alignment between categorial and secondary focus transparent from co(n)text
(b) Transposed origo (or 'voiced' deference: deferring to someone from the point of view of another	use of reported speech or other (more implicit) framing devices
(c) Veiled aggression : using honorific forms in acts of rudeness, coercion, hostility, etc.	non-congruence between propositional content and honorific indexicality
(d) Hyperpoliteness : using higher levels of other-raising or self-lowering than normatively required (as in strategic manipulation; sarcasm, etc.	normative standard of appropriate use (for current dyad) evident as baseline
(e) Shifts of affective stance : foregrounding of affective stance or alignment with interlocutors	shifts in honorific usage (e.g., back-and-forth between H and NH forms) in speaking to the same interlocutor
(f) Reference maintenance : use of honorific devices as reference-tracking mechanism	null anaphora of NPs with deference marking in predicate

Language users do not commonly describe honorific usage as linked to these effects. This is hardly surprising given the relative non-transparency of the signal structure (or sign configuration) that implements such effects. The effects in Table 8 are not the effects of honorific lexemes (qua items of the language). They are the effects of text-configurations that contain a lexeme plus the criterial co-textual features shown on the right. Such 'superposed' effects are, in other words, implemented by text-configurations of which the lexeme-token is a fragment. Indeed the effect is non-detachable from co-text, i.e., vanishes once the lexeme is considered in isolation from the total text-structure that implements it. Hence such

effects are perfectly easy to construe when the total text-configuration is an object of experience (i.e., in contextualized discourse) but not transparent to native speakers in decontextualized accounts of language and, hence, uncommon in the data of explicit stereotypes of use.

6. Social domain

I have noted above that the social domain of register stereotypes is an important variable in the study of register systems. Many kinds of society-internal differences in register competence and use are observed cross-linguistically. I have already discussed some of the factors leading to such differences (2.2) and a few of their most common consequences (2.3). I now illustrate these points with a few examples.

One kind of social difference involves variation in competence over lexemes and associated forms. In the case of honorific terms for parts of the body (cf. Table 7, f) Errington found that all honorific forms are not known to every informant. Using questionnaires/interview data Errington observed the regularities of metapragmatic judgment listed in Table 9. Whereas the *ngoko* (ordinary) forms are widely recognized, the expressions in the *krama inggil* (honorific) column are not equally well known. Speakers who command the largest repertoires can, of course, perform an image of their own cultivation and higher status through a performed mastery of these forms, a display of competence that may itself entitle them to deference from others.

Table 9. Javanese [-human] common nouns

<i>Gloss</i>	<i>Ngoko</i>	<i>Krama Inggil</i> (<i>honorific</i>)	<i>% speakers who</i> <i>recognize KI form</i>
tooth	untu	waja	100
eye	mata	paningal	100
mouth	langkem	thuthuk	98
face	rai	(pa)suryan	83
chest	dada	jaja	61
neck	gulu	jangga	61
knee	dengkul	jengku	30
foot	sikut	siku	7

(Source: Errington 1988: 168)

A second kind of variation involves a partial fractionation of stereotype values linked to lexemes: Although the lexemes in question are themselves widely recognized the standards of use associated with particular forms exhibit interesting social asymmetries. Thus in the addressee-honorific system listed in Table 10 the middle column, *madya*, involves competing valorizations among Javanese speakers.

Table 10. Addressee honorifics in Javanese: Repertoire contrasts

Gloss	Ngoko	Madya(krama)	Krama
	<i>informal / formal</i>		<i>informal / formal</i>
'please'	yok / ayo	ngga	mangga / sumangga
'again'	(me)nèh/maneh	melih	malih
'to'	marang	teng	dhateng / dhumateng
'only'	waé / baé	mawon, men, mon	mawon / kémawon
passive	di-	di-	pun- / dipun-
'what'	pa / apa	napa	menapa / punapa
'no'	ra / ora	mboten	mboten
'this' (proximal)	ki / iki, kiyi	niki	menika / punika
'that' (medial)	ki / kuwi / iku	niku	
'that' (distal)	ké / kaé / ika	nika	

(Sources: Errington 1985, Poedjosoedarmo 1969)

Madya repertoires are evaluated differently from different social positions, both in terms of stereotypes of lexemes (e.g., whether they are 'polite' or not) and in terms of standards of appropriate use.

Traditional nobles or *priyayi* view *madya* lexemes as impolite and as appropriate only in speech directed at non-nobles (from whom *krama* honorifics are normatively expected in response). Thus from the positional perspective of traditional nobles *madya* repertoires are stereotypically out-group speech (used for non-nobles); the pattern of asymmetric exchange (i.e., giving *madya*, receiving *krama*) indexes the nobles' higher status. However non-nobles and younger 'modern' *priyayi* evaluate *madya* speech differently. For such speakers *madya* lexemes exhibit an intermediate level of politeness (rather than impoliteness) whose use is extended from the out-group/asymmetric patterns found among the tradi-

tional nobility to patterns of in-group symmetric exchange that index no status differential.

7. Semiotic range

In the foregoing sections I have discussed a range of processes through which particular enactable values come to be associated with pragmatic signs. I wish now to comment on some processes through which stereotypes of linguistic signs are extended to non-linguistic signs. I have discussed this process in great detail for Lhasa Tibetan honorific register (Agha 1998). I present a brief summary here.

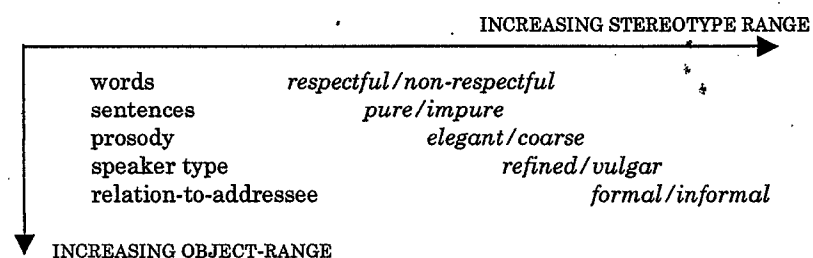


Figure 1. Cultural diagrams used to construe honorific acts in Tibetan (Agha 1998)

In Tibetan, the notion that words can be sorted into 'respectful' and 'non-respectful' repertoires motivates stereotypes of the purity/impurity of sentences (see Table 16ff. below), of the elegance/coarseness of prosody, of the refinement/vulgarity of speakers, and of the formality/informality expressed towards addressee. These layers partly motivate each other: the purity of honorific sentences is evaluated partly by criteria of lexeme cohesion; the refinement of speakers partly by competence over large lexical repertoires and by the ability to produce highly cohesive or 'pure' honorific utterances. I now offer a brief comparative discussion of a Javanese case.

Poedjosoedarmo 1968 reports that Javanese *ngoko* 'ordinary' speech contrasts not only with the *krama* 'polite' vocabulary (see Table 10) but also with the *kasar* 'crude, coarse' vocabulary shown in Table 11. The register contrast is grasped by native speakers in terms of lexeme distinctions ('For every *kasar* word there is an or-

dinary *Ngoko* equivalent that does not have the implication of vulgarity which the *kasar* word has..."; 1968: 64) and also in terms of stereotypes of use and users ("*Kasar* words are always considered vulgar. They are not usually used by the upper class. Even lower class people usually use them only in anger"). The contrasts are therefore conceptualized—at least by upper-class persons—as differentiating a system of speaker-focal demeanor indexicals, i.e., as forms that make palpable the characterological attributes of the speaker.

Table 11. Javanese *kasar* 'coarse' vocabularies

	Gloss	NGOKO 'ordinary'	KASAR 'coarse'
Nouns:	Eye	mripat	<i>mata</i>
	Mouth	tjangkem	<i>tjatjat</i>
	Stomach	weteng	<i>wadhq</i>
Adjs:	Dead	mati	<i>modar</i>
	Pregnant	meteng	<i>mblendheng, busong</i>
	Stupid	bodho	<i>gablag</i>
Verbs:	Eat	mangan	<i>mbadhag</i>
	Copulate	saesmi	<i>laki</i>

(Source: Poedjosoedarmo 1968)

The term *kasar* is also associated with prosodic contrasts. The account given by Poedjosoedarmo is summarized in Table 12. Phonetic contrasts of speech tempo, volume and dynamic range are typified metapragmatically as contrasts of speaker refinement versus coarseness.

Table 12. Javanese *kasar* 'coarse' prosody

	ALUS 'refined'	KASAR 'coarse'
TEMPO:	slower	more rapid
VOLUME:	softer	louder
DYNAMIC RANGE:	more monotonous intonation	greater extremes of intonation

(Source: Poedjosoedarmo 1968:55)

A comparison of Tables 11 and 12 shows that from the standpoint of this cultural scheme *kasar* 'crude, coarse' demeanor is exhibited

both by certain lexemes and by prosodic patterns. The term *kasar* is now a metasemiotic construct used to typify diverse phenomenal behaviors. All of these behaviors are now likened to each other—grouped together—under a metasemiotic classification. The objects grouped together in this way are themselves performable signs that can be displayed or avoided in interaction.

8. Speech levels

Speech level systems are metapragmatic frameworks that evaluate the **register-cohesiveness** of text as a higher-order index of social role and relationship. In most systems the cohesiveness of text is evaluated in terms of ideologies of rank and stratification, whether in terms of 'levels of deference' to others, or stratified indices of speaker rank, or both. Several kinds of speech-level systems have been reported in the literature on honorifics. I discuss three varieties here that are quite common in languages of the world.

8.1. Phonolexical and prosodic speech levels

One cross-linguistically common kind of speech-level system involves patterns of rankable deference/demeanor based on phonolexical and prosodic patterns. The Persian (Table 6) and Javanese (Table 12) cases are examples of such systems. Wolof has a system of prosodic speech levels unlinked to lexicogrammatical registers of this kind (Irvine 1990). The Zulu Hlonipha vocabulary is a system of phonolexical repertoires that is structurally akin to the cases in Tables 5 and 6; however the metapragmatic framework and ideology of use is linked to respectful 'avoidance' (Irvine and Gal 2000).

From a typological standpoint languages differ in the kinds of honorific repertoires and speech levels that coexist within them. In Persian, phonolexical registers and speech levels co-exist with lexicogrammatical registers of the type discussed in section 5.0. In Javanese prosodic speech levels co-exist with lexicogrammatical registers and an elaborate system of speech levels based on them (see 8.3). The more complex systems exhibit a greater semiotic range (a greater variety of sign-types) linked to ideologies of honorific value.

8.2. Speech levels based on deictic patterning

A second kind of speech-level system involves variation in cotextual patterning of deictic elements. Systems of second person pronominal deixis are among the most common varieties. Such systems involve text patterns containing pronoun lexemes and agreement morphology (see 3.0 above). A five-level system has been described for Maithili (Table 13). All five text-patterns denote addressee and may be glossed (referentially) as 'you'; they differ in deference construal in the manner shown.

Table 13. Maithili deference levels: Variation in 2nd person deictic usage

Text pattern		Deference level
Pronoun	verb agreement	
apne....	-hũ	Level 1 high honorific
ahãã....	-hũ	Level 2 honorific
tõ	-ha	Level 3 neutral
tõ	-hii	Level 4 nonhonorific
tõ	-(h)ẽ	Level 5 low nonhonorific

(Source: Singh 1989)

The system is also linked to indexical effects associated with speaker demeanor. As in any such system the number of honorific contrasts and deference levels that exist in usage varies by sub-population of speakers. In the Maithili case levels 4 and 5 are not distinguished by all speakers. Hence the tendency to make finer discriminations in other-deference is secondarily indexical of speaker type.

Other deictic categories such as mood and voice are cross-linguistically associated with degrees of politeness. In Malagasy text-patterns involving mood and grammatical voice index deference levels: active voice imperatives are judged harsh and abrupt, and passive and circumstantial imperatives as more respectful towards subject/addressee (Keenan 1989).

In Korean mood distinctions are more robustly grasped through an ideology of speech levels. The system involves textualized co-occurrence relationships between address forms (pronouns, vocatives, etc.) and sentence final mood endings. Since the lan-

guage exhibits pervasive null anaphora, only the mood endings are obligatory sentence constituents; they are therefore treated as citation forms by grammarians. The term 'speech level' was first employed for this system by Martin 1964 but is now widely adopted.

There is of course no single speech-level system that can be described for the Korean language as a whole. Most textbook descriptions describe Standard Korean, though even this system is clearly undergoing reanalysis and simplification. The 'early Standard' system in Table 14 approximates the Standard prevailing more than half a century ago; deference distinctions extended to other mood categories as well though only declarative and imperative forms are cited here.

Table 14. Korean speech levels: the early Standard system

Levels	Declarative	Imperative
Completely raising	-naita	-sose now archaic
Completely raising	-pnita	-
Conventionally raising	-eyo	-eyo
Conventionally lowering	-ney	-key
Completely lowering	-ta	-ela
Panmal	-e	-e ambiguous

(Source: Wang 1990, Table 1; citing Choy 1955)

Table 15 describes more contemporary distinctions prevailing in a village called Cihwali (a pseudonym) lying 300 kilometers south-east of Seoul (see Wang 1990 for other ethnographic details).

Table 15. Korean speech levels : contemporary Cihwali

Speech level	Forms			
	Decl.	Imp.	Interr.	Propositive
hasio	-pnita	-sio	-(si)pnikka -(si)eyo	-sipsita
haso	-eyo	-eyo	-eyo	-siciyo
	-so	-so	-so	-psita
hakey	-ney	-key	-nka	-sey
hayla	-ta	-ela	-na	-ca
panmal	-e	-e	-e	-e

(Source: Wang 1990, Table 7)

A comparison of the two tables shows that the 'early Standard' system of speech levels is undergoing a process of reanalysis and change. The changes are quite complex and regionally distinct for various communities of Korean speakers (see also Pei 1992). Many of the variant systems differ not as geographic dialects but along demographic dimensions such as generation and socioeconomic class within dialect regions. Awareness of these differences enregisters these forms as indexical of speaker-type for particular social categories of language users. The overall trend is towards simplification to two or three levels of addressee-deference, linked to indexicals of speaker type in various locale-specific ways.

We can understand something of the process of reanalysis by considering conflicting metapragmatic judgments associated with these forms. For example, in Cihwali many speakers give conflicting stereotype accounts of the highest level (*hasio*), offering judgments about lexemes that conflict with the value assigned to patterns of exchange. When speaking of isolated forms, 'gentry' speakers describe the *hasio* level as the only positively honorific level, and *haso* as merging with the other two "conventionally lowering" levels (*hakey* and *hayla*) below it; *panmal* is ambiguous and neutral in deference for some consultants. However, assessments of patterns of exchange present a different picture. Patterns of *hasio*-*haso* exchange are treated as marking nearly equal status of interlocutors (this is contrary to the stereotype that *hasio* is much more honorific than *haso*); and patterns of *haso*-*hakey* and *haso*-*hayla* exchange are said to mark clear status asymmetries (this is contrary to the judgment that *haso* merges with these two other-lowering levels).

Wang explains the conflicting reports as involving, in essence, a confusion of first-order and second-order indexical values. In actual usage the *hasio* level is now used almost exclusively by the gentry and is stereotypically associated with them; the level is thus treated as system of second-order indexicals of speaker status. The overvaluing of *hasio* in reports about isolated forms reflects awareness of this speaker-focal indexical effect. But evaluation of patterns of exchange engage more directly with the addressee-focal effects of a given use, evaluating the form used in response as indexical of status asymmetries among interlocutors.

8.3. Speech levels based on lexical cohesion

Whereas Korean has a relatively small number of honorific nouns and verbs, languages like Lhasa Tibetan and Javanese have very larger honorific vocabularies. In these languages honorific forms can occur in many syntactic positions within a sentence thus motivating far more elaborate possibilities of lexeme cohesion (or its absence). In Tibetan for example, the maximally honorific sentence in Table 16, (e) is evaluated as a "pure" honorific utterance; judgments of utterance purity are extended to judgments of speaker refinement; the intermediate or "mixed" levels in (b)-(d) are evaluated as indexing a variety of categories of sub-standard speaker demeanor (see Agha 1998). Degrees of cohesion of other-deference are thus reanalyzed as indexical of speaker attributes and social status.

Table 16. Lexeme cohesion and 'speech levels' in Tibetan: five ways of saying 'Mother went to [the] house'

	MOTHER	HOUSE-DAT	WENT AUX	
(a)	<i>āma</i>	<i>qhānpaa</i>	<i>chūi sōŋ</i> }	non-honorific sentence
(b)	<i>āma laā</i>	<i>qhānpaa</i>	<i>chūi sōŋ</i> }	mixed honorific usage
(c)	<i>āma</i>	<i>sim-qhāā</i> 1a	<i>chūi sōŋ</i> }	
(d)	<i>āma laā</i>	<i>qhānpaa</i>	<i>phēē sōŋ</i> }	
(e)	<i>āma laā</i>	<i>sim-qhāā</i> 1a	<i>phēē sōŋ</i> }	'pure' honorific sentence

(Source: Agha 1998) Boldface marks honorific lexemes.

In Javanese analogous speech-level distinctions occur. However the ideological codification of speech-levels is more elaborately expressed in native grammatological traditions. Table 17 illustrates the nine-way scheme presented by Poedjosoedarmo 1968; level 1 is the most deferential, level 9 the least deferential. Schemes of this kind are normative codifications that associate sentence conjugate structure (lexeme cohesion) with facts of stereotypic status asymmetry in events of use. How?

Note, first, that particular metapragmatic terms—such as repertoire names (*krama*, *madya*, etc.), terms for kinds of persons ('young,' 'old') and relative rank ('equal')—are employed as *names for sentence speech-levels* (column I). Second, facts of lexeme cohesion are also described by using repertoire names (column II). The

greater the use of highly honorific lexemes (*krama* and *krama inggil* items) the higher the sentence level.

Note that speech level names typify a level of lexeme choice as indexing a level of social role and relationship. For instance the high-*krama* based level 1 was said to be used by young *priyayi* (nobles) in addressing older nobles (hence termed *mudha krama* 'young *krama*' by stereotype of speaker-kind). Lexeme choice and associated facts are now reanalyzed as diagramming social differences among persons.

Table 17. Javanese speech levels: Early Standard
(Poedjosoedarmo 1968)

I. Speech-level name	II. Lexical conjugate structure	
	Affixes	Words
1. <i>Mudha-krama</i> 'young <i>krama</i> '	<i>krama</i>	<i>krama</i> + KI
2. <i>Kramantara</i> 'equal <i>krama</i> '	<i>krama</i>	<i>krama</i> ; no KI
3. <i>Wreda-krama</i> 'old <i>krama</i> '	<i>mixed</i>	<i>krama</i>
4. <i>Madya-krama</i> 'middle <i>krama</i> '	<i>ngoko</i>	<i>madya</i> + KI
5. <i>Madyantara</i> 'equal <i>madya</i> '	<i>ngoko</i>	<i>madya</i> ; no KI
6. <i>Madya-ngoko</i>	<i>ngoko</i>	<i>madya</i>
7. <i>Basa-antya</i>	<i>ngoko</i>	<i>ngoko</i> ; some <i>krama</i>
8. <i>Antya-basa</i>	<i>ngoko</i>	<i>ngoko</i>
9. <i>Ngoko-lugu</i> 'plain <i>ngoko</i> '	<i>ngoko</i>	<i>ngoko</i>

Note: KI = *krama inggil* 'high honorific'

Such codifications reflect particular historical stages of (normative) conception of usage. The scheme in Table 17 (or a similar variant) may well have served as the institutionally dominant model of usage among *priyayi* in the first half of the 20th century. But by the 1970s and 1980s the situation had clearly changed (see Table 18). Whereas conservative *priyayi* continued to frown on mixed speech levels 'modern' *priyayi* (including the younger *priyayi* who allegedly used pure *mudha krama* in the earlier model) had come to find mixed usage more acceptable.

Table 18. Acceptability of 'mixed' speech levels by social domain of evaluator: conservative vs. modern speakers

Sentence	%age speakers who judge sentence acceptable	
	conservative	modern
(a) <i>ingkang saé kados riyin</i>	0	77
(b) <i>piyambakipun mbèkta napa?</i>	25	71
(c) <i>seratipun sampun dugi, dèrèng?</i>	15	84
(d) <i>ngantos saniki dèrèng wonten</i>	0	73
(e) <i>nawi kula kèmawon, priipun?</i>	0	68

(Source: Errington 1985: 147-152) *Krama* vocabulary in boldface, *madya* forms in italics.

9. Conclusion

I have argued above that an adequate typological framework for honorific registers requires attention to a range of reflexive processes of value production, maintenance and transformation (linked to language and associated signs) that occur in all language communities. Once we approach the data of honorifics from this perspective a great many apparently distinct systems (e.g., differing in repertoire range and elaboration) can be shown to involve similar processes and thus be understood in comparative terms.

Notes

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¹ As a word of the English language, the term 'honorific' is ambiguous. In one sense the term may be glossed as 'capable of conferring honor or respect' (i.e., positively valued for respect). In a second, broader sense the term applies to any expression which 'pertains to honor or respect' (whether positively or negatively valued for respect). The second, broader sense—'pertaining to honor or respect'—is due to a general property of the suffix *-ic* (and thus found in many other words of the form *X-ic*, viz., *calor-ic* 'pertaining to calories', *atom-ic* 'pertaining to atoms'). I use the term in the second, more inclusive sense, of which the first is a special case. In the broader sense the term 'honorific' applies to any system of signs that pertain to matters of respect, e.g., whether positively or negatively valued for honorific effect (polite/refined or rude/coarse); whether the effect be construed as respect to others

(addressee, referent, bystander), or as expressing the speaker's own respectability (demeanor, status) and, hence, entitlement to respect from others. Much of the older literature has used the term 'honorific' for the special case of 'positively valued referent-focal lexemes'; but the wider usage is necessary since ideologies of social relations frequently link these different kinds of honor and respect to each other. The point is exemplified in some detail in the paper.

2. The term 'lexeme' refers (in the traditional linguist's sense) to the class of elementary unit of form/sense in a language (those that require an entry in the lexicon). The term is not equivalent to the ordinary folk-notion of 'word' (viz., 'not all words are lexemes and, conversely, not all lexemes are words' Lyons 1995:47). The class of lexemes includes morphemes, word-stems, idioms, and other holophrastic lexations (see Lyons 1995, ch. 2); the term 'lexemic' refers to elementary units of this kind. The term 'lexical' refers to units that are either elementary lexemes or lexeme collocations, i.e., words and expressions. Thus the 'lexical repertoires' of an honorific register differ from the rest of the language by phonolexical, morpholexical and phraseological formation; they are most commonly discussed and described by language users as 'words' (in all the various folk-senses of this term).
3. For example honorific titles and terms of address show up in every language; distinct forms of honorific pronoun, proper name and kinterm are fairly common; elaborate repertoires of honorific nouns, verbs, and adjective are typologically more restricted.
4. Given the potential defeasibility of stereotypic values by co(n)textual signs no known notion of 'code' is even slightly useful in thinking about the effects of usage. The intuition that honorific codes exist is an intuition about normative codifications, not a satisfactory perspective on actual usage. Most views that lexemes 'encode' pragmatic values tend to formulate an incorrect analogy between syntactic semantic sense and performative indexicality. On this view the stereotypic indexicality of lexemes is viewed as the lexeme's inherent capacity to code an autonomous contextual fact. The fact that the co(n)textual implementation of a lexeme can yield effects consistent with the stereotypic value of the form (e.g., the case where a speaker who is identifiable from co(n)text as a female does in fact use stereotypically 'female' speech) is the main type of case that empirically motivates this intuition. But this is just a special case given the possibility of interactional tropes discussed later in the paper (see section 3.2, 5.2 et passim).
5. The range of co-textual cues that determine singular reference (and hence the polite construal) is rather broad. Comrie 1975 discusses a range of features of the discursive co-text that serve to disambiguate numerosity of pronominal reference in several European languages. In every such case, additional, more text-configurative cues (such as patterns of lexical cohesion from prior discourse) as well as features of the non-linguistic co-text (e.g., fixing of referent by eye-gaze) often play an accompanying role.
6. The tension between these two metapragmatic facts—an implicit regularity of contextualized response behavior and an explicit regularity of decontextualized description—is straightforwardly resolved, of course, on the view that there are two lexemes that have the shape *vous*, a plural lexeme and a polite-singular. The homonymy argument is just a way of restating the co(n)textually observed facts while preserving the intuition that differences of denotation involve different lexemes. The restatement has no empirical consequences for the study of contextu-

alized discourse though it is vastly more accurate in capturing folk-intuitions about language structure and use.

7. Although the historical details differ for the different European languages, it is evident that forces of language standardization played a significant role in register simplification during the 19th century. Liston 1999 describes several dozen pronominal tropes that existed in different dialects of German between the 16th and 19th centuries; only a few have survived in modern Standard German. Despite the influence of Standard British English a number of second person pronoun forms (including forms of *thou*) still survive in contemporary 'traditional dialects' in Britain (Trudgill 1999).
8. The most elaborate registers also exhibit more repertoire differentiation in other lexicogrammatical domains, not shown in the table, such as case affixes and postpositions (Korean, Tibetan), adverbs and adjectives (Japanese, Javanese), and markers of grammatical voice (Javanese).
9. Hence ditransitive verbs of type (c) project deference as emanating from someone other than the speaker-utterer of the verb token. They express 'voiced' deference effects in this sense, e.g., for *give*, it is the giver (not the utterer) that is presented as owing deference to the receiver. Since ditransitive verbs have both animate subjects and objects they yield two honorific forms in many languages, one of type (b) and another of type (c). These are sometimes distinguished in native metapragmatic terminologies by distinct register names (e.g., *krama inggil* vs. *krama andhap* in Javanese; *sonkeigo* vs. *kenjoogo* in Japanese). For a detailed discussion of how such systems operate in particular languages, see Agha 1993, 1998 for a discussion of Tibetan; Errington 1988 for Javanese; Inoue 1979 and Matsumoto 1997 for Japanese. The literature on other languages is summarized with bibliographic citations in Agha 1994.

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