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Honorific (mis)matches in allocutive languages with a focus on Japanese

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This paper examines honorific mismatches between the allocutive marker and a 2P pronoun within a clause in Japanese. Unlike allocutive languages such as Tamil, Punjabi, Magahi, among others, which require obligatory matching in honorificity (and phi-features) between the allocutive marker and a 2P pronoun in a clause, Japanese allows the honorific allocutive marker to also occur with a non-honorific 2P pronoun. These mismatching structures can be interpreted both literally and sarcastically. We provide a two-step analysis to explain such mismatches: first, we claim that 2P pronouns in Japanese are lexical items, which cannot participate in syntactic binding to inherit their honorific features from a left-peripheral honorific head (e.g., c). Instead, they enter syntax with pre-specified honorific information. Allocutive markers, by contrast, obtain their honorificity in syntax, typically via agreement. Consequently, nothing in syntax forces matching between 2P pronouns and allocutive markers. Secondly, mismatching instances are also not ruled out in the pragmatic component because the meanings encoded by the 2P pronouns and the allocutive marker in Japanese are not comparable, and contribute independently to the meaning of the entire sentence. The honorific information encoded in pronouns is the speaker's positive/negative attitude towards the addressee based on his/her evaluation of the addressee, while the allocutive marker encodes the speaker's intent to be polite, irrespective of the evaluation of the addressee, who may even remain unidentified. It is possible for these two meanings to be expressed simultaneously in select conversational set-ups, leading to felicitous mismatching structures in the language.

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1 Introduction

This paper discusses honorific mismatches between an allocutive/addressee agreement marker and a 2P pronoun within the same clause. Allocutive languages can be divided into two groups based on whether or not they allow mismatches between allocutivity and 2P pronouns. Languages such as Punjabi ban any mismatch between the allocutive marker and the 2P pronoun. An illustration is given in (1). Punjabi uses its plural forms as singular honorific forms. Subsequently, the plural allocutive marker *je* used for a singular, honorific addressee can co-occur only with the plural 2P pronoun. Using the singular 2P pronoun (meant for a non-honorific addressee) results in ungrammaticality. By contrast, languages such as Japanese allow all combinations of the honorific allocutive marker with 2P pronouns, which may be honorific or non-honorific, as shown in (2).

(1) Maa {twaa/***tai**}-nuu bulaa rayii **je**.
 mother.NOM 2PL.OBL/2SG.OBL-DOM call PRG.F.SG ALLOC.PL
 ‘Mother is calling you.’

(2) {**Anata/kisama**}-ni-wa wakar-anai **des-yoo-ne**.
 2H/2NH-DAT-TOP understand-NEG COP.ALLOC.H-PRS-SFP
 ‘You do not understand (this).’

In view of this variation in mismatches across Punjabi and Japanese, this paper aims to answer two questions:

- (3) a. Where in grammar are honorific mismatches between pronouns and allocutive markers ruled out — in the syntactic or in the pragmatic component?
 b. How does Japanese permit various combinations of the honorific allocutive marker with honorific/non-honorific 2P pronouns?

With regard to the first question, there are two existing approaches in the literature. According to the first approach, which we label as the syntactic approach, honorificity is encoded on a functional projection cP in the clause-periphery, via a feature (e.g., [status]). This projection is responsible for licensing honorificity on all 2P items in the clause — via binding on 2P pronouns and via agreement on allocutive markers (Portner et al. 2019; Alok 2021). Since the 2P pronoun and the honorific allocutive marker are syntactically associated with the same c head, no mismatch is tolerated in syntax. The second approach is the semantic-pragmatic approach to honorificity. It requires that the expressive honorific content on the lexical entries of the two items (i.e., the 2P pronoun and the allocutive marker) is comparable in semantics/pragmatics (Potts 2007; McCready 2019). If a speaker uses an item which honors the addressee, and also an item that dishonors the addressee within the same sentence, the combination would be conceptually strange and language would work to block the combination. Subsequently, mismatches are ruled

out for pragmatic reasons. Under both approaches, a mismatch in honorificity is predicted to be infelicitous. However, as we show in Section 2, genuine mismatching examples with literal readings are found in Japanese, raising a challenge for both approaches.

Examining honorific mismatches in Japanese, this paper argues that the insights of the two approaches are essentially on the right track. However, the syntactic approach does not generalize to all languages, and the pragmatic approach requires revisions relating to whether or not the meanings of 2P pronouns and allocutivity are comparable across all languages. A crucial premise of the syntactic binding based account is that pronouns are functional (and not lexical) items that can be bound. More specifically, it assumes that honorificity must be a feature of pronouns akin to phi-features such as person and number, and not descriptive content. We claim that this premise of the syntactic approach to mismatches is not universal since the morphosyntax of honorific pronouns varies across languages. Honorificity on Punjabi 2P pronouns is indeed a formal feature like other phi-features. Thus, honorific 2P pronouns in Punjabi are functional items that may be construed as bound variables, forcing matching between 2P pronouns and the allocutive marker in syntax. However, honorificity on Japanese pronouns corresponds to descriptive content, making them lexical items. Following existing literature (Noguchi 1997; Déchaine & Wiltschko 2002, among many others), lexical items cannot be construed as bound variables. Subsequently, the honorific specification on Japanese pronouns is syntactically independent of the honorific content on the allocutive marker. This is the subject matter of Section 3.

Even if honorificity on pronouns and allocutive markers in Japanese is independent of each other in syntax, the following question remains to be answered: why are mismatches not banned by the pragmatic requirement for consistency? As we argue in Section 4, this is because the meanings of Japanese 2P pronouns and honorific allocutivity are not only distinct, as already advocated by McCready (2019), but also incomparable. In particular, while the lexical honorific information encoded in pronouns is the speaker's positive/negative evaluation of the addressee, the allocutive marker purely encodes the speaker's intent to be polite, independent of the characteristics of the addressee. It is possible for these two meanings to be expressed simultaneously in select conversational set-ups, leading to felicitous mismatching structures in the language. Section 5 concludes the paper with some open issues.

2 Empirical landscape of honorific (mis)matching

Allocutivity, also known as allocutive or addressee agreement, is a phenomenon where certain languages have distinct verbal morphology that encodes the addressee of the speech act (Oyharçabal 1993; Miyagawa 2012; 2022; Antonov 2015; Kaur 2017; 2020a; 2020b; Alok & Baker 2018; Haddican 2018; Yamada 2019; McFadden 2020; Alok 2021 etc.).¹ A classic example

¹ The data, where not cited, comes from the authors' native speaker judgments.

comes from Basque in (4), where based on the properties of the addressee (male/female and peer), the verb bears unique morphology *-k* and *-n*.

- (4) *Basque* (Oyharçabal 1993)
- a. Pette-k lan egin di-k
Peter-ERG work do.PFV 3ERG-M
'Peter worked.' (said to a male friend)
- b. Pette-k lan egin di-n
Peter-ERG work do.PFV 3ERG-F
'Peter worked.' (said to a female friend)

All documented allocutive languages allow allocutivity to co-occur with 2P pronouns in the main clause (Antonov 2015). However, the co-occurring 2P pronoun can vary based on: (a) whether it triggers agreement, and (b) whether it can mismatch in features vis-à-vis the allocutive marker. This divides allocutive languages into two groups.

2.1 Group 1: Punjabi

Group 1 consists of allocutive languages which allow only non-agreeing 2P pronouns with allocutivity. Furthermore, no featural-mismatch is allowed between the 2P pronoun and the allocutive marker. Languages like Basque, Tamil, Magahi and Punjabi belong to Group 1. We illustrate with Punjabi.

Punjabi has two 2P pronouns *tuu* (*tai* is its oblique form) and *tusii* (*twa* is its oblique form). The form *tuu* can only be used for a singular non-honorific addressee while *tusii* can be used either for a plurality of addressees independent of their honorificity, or for a singular honorific addressee. A similar divide is seen in allocutive marking. The form *ii/aa* is the singular non-honorific form, while *je* is the plural form used both for a plurality of addressees as well as a singular, honorific addressee.

First, there is an agreement based restriction on the co-occurrence of a 2P pronoun and the allocutive marker in this language: when *tusii* is in the subject position and bears nominative case, it triggers corresponding agreement on the verbal complex. In such structures, the allocutive marker cannot occur. As shown in (5a), the nominative 2P pronoun *tusii* must trigger corresponding 2P agreement *o*. The allocutive marker *je* cannot occur in such a sentence. Contrast this with the example in (5b), where the 2P pronoun appears in the object position bearing an oblique case. Consequently, it does not trigger agreement — allocutivity is allowed in such a sentence. Note that truth-conditionally, no difference arises due to the use of the 3P person auxiliary *e* versus the allocutive marker *je* in (5b).

- (5) a. **Tusii** maa-nuu bulaa raye {o/(**je*)}
2PL.NOM mother-DOM call PRG.M.PL be.PRS.2PL/ALLOC.PL
'You are calling mother.'

- b. Maa **twaa-nuu** bulaa rayii {e/je}
 mother.NOM 2PL.OBL-DOM call PRG.F.SG be.PRG.3SG/ALLOC.PL
 ‘Mother is calling you.’

Secondly, when the two addressee-oriented expressions (i.e., a 2P pronoun and an allocutive marker) co-occur, they are not allowed to mismatch. The 2P plural/honorific form *je* can only co-occur with the 2P plural/honorific pronoun *twaa-nuu*, but not with the 2P singular/non-honorific form *tai-nuu*, as shown in (6a). Similarly, the non-honorific allocutive marker *aa/ii* can only occur with the 2P singular/non-honorific form *tai-nuu*, as shown in (6b).

- (6) a. Maa {**twaa-nuu**/**tai-nuu*} bulaa rayii **je**.
 mother.NOM 2PL.OBL-DOM/2SG.OBL-DOM call PRG.F.SG ALLOC.PL
 ‘Mother is calling you.’
- b. Maa {**tai-nuu**/**twaa-nuu*} bulaa rayii **aa**.
 mother.NOM 2SG.OBL-DOM/2PL.OBL-DOM call PRG.F.SG ALLOC.SG
 ‘Mother is calling you.’

2.2 Group 2: Japanese

In contrast with Group 1, Group 2 allows allocutivity with all 2P arguments, regardless of agreement and (mis)matching features. Languages such as Korean and Japanese belong to Group 2. We illustrate with Japanese.

Japanese has an honorific form of the allocutive marker *-mas*, which appears on the verb. When the sentence lacks a verb — for example, when it is predicated by an adjective or a noun in a copula construction, *des-* appears instead of *-mas*.² Since there is no phi-agreement in Japanese — i.e., a 2P pronoun in any structural position does not control agreement on the predicate — the allocutive marker can always be licensed regardless of whether the 2P pronoun appears in the subject or in the object position in a clause. This is shown in (7).

- (7) a. **Anata**-wa okaasan-o yon-dei-**masi**-ta.
 2H-TOP mother-ACC call-PRG-ALLOC.H-PST
 ‘You were calling (your) mother.’
- b. Okaasan-wa **anata**-o yon-dei-**masi**-ta.
 mother-TOP 2H-ACC call-PRG-ALLOC.H-PST
 ‘(Your) mother was calling you.’

² We should note here that honorific allocutivity (*-mas*) is distinct from so-called CONTENT HONORIFICS whereby the speaker encodes their respect for the referent of the subject or the object of the verb. We refer the reader to the previous literature for an extensive discussion of content-honorifics (Harada 1976; Kondo 1990; Kikuchi 1997; Shibatani 1998; Niinuma 2003; Hasegawa 2017; Yamada 2019; Ikawa & Yamada 2021; Ikawa 2021).

Moreover, Group 2 allows featural mismatches (in honorificity) between the allocutive marker and 2P pronouns. To show this, we first present the pronominal paradigm in Japanese.³ The language has numerous forms for pronouns of each person specification. Consider the paradigm of pronominal forms in Japanese in **Table 1** (see also McCready 2019 for a detailed description of the pronouns). As is evident from the table, while the pronouns vary in the person feature, and in gender for 3P, there are no distinct singular and plural pronominal forms. The language employs associative markers to encode plurality. Second, for each person specification, pronouns vary based on honorific meanings. **Table 2** shows an approximated honorific scale for 2P pronouns.

Person	SG
1	<i>watakusi, watasi, wasi, atakusi, atasi, assi</i> (archaic), <i>atai, kotti, kotira, wai, waga-hai</i> (archaic), <i>ore, ora, oira, boku, uti, mii, sessya</i> (archaic), <i>soregasi</i> (archaic), <i>tin</i> (archaic), ...
2	<i>omae, onusi</i> (archaic), <i>kisama, kimi, anata, anta, anchan, temee, soti</i> (archaic), <i>sotti, sotira</i> , ...
3	<i>kare</i> (m), <i>kanozyo</i> (f), <i>yatu, aitu</i> , ...

Table 1: Japanese: pronominal paradigm.

non-honorific ←---		-----	-----→ honorific
<i>kisama,</i>	<i>omae,</i>	<i>kimi, sotti,</i>	<i>anata,</i>
<i>temee</i>	<i>anta</i>	<i>onusi</i> (archaic)	<i>soti</i> (archaic), <i>sotira</i>

Table 2: Japanese: honorific scale for 2P pronouns.

Keeping this in mind, we examine the (mis)matching examples in Japanese. First, consider the sentence in (8a).

- (8) a. Kare-wa **anata**-ni kore-o makase-**masi**-ta.
 he-TOP 2H-DAT this-ACC entrust-ALLOC.H-PRS
 ‘He entrusted this to you.’
- b. Kare-wa **sotira**-ni kore-o makase-**masi**-ta.
 he-TOP 2H-DAT this-ACC entrust-ALLOC.H-PRS
 ‘He entrusted this to you.’

³ In Japanese, proper names can also be used to refer to the addressee (an imposter use; Yamada To appear). However, we focus only on pronouns in this paper to ensure a fair comparison with languages like Punjabi, which do not allow the use of proper names to refer to the addressee, unless the noun is used as a vocative.

As shown in (8a), an honorific 2P pronoun *anata* can co-occur with the honorific allocutive marker *-mas*. Not surprisingly, a similar matching example can obtain with *sotira*, another honorific pronoun, as shown in (8b).

What is interesting is that it is also possible to combine the honorific allocutive marker *-mas* with pronouns in the mid-honorific range in **Table 2** (i.e., *kimi*, *omae*, and *anta*). Consider the examples in (9), where the relevant pronouns are glossed as MH (mid-honorific).

- (9) a. **Kimi**-wa dare-to siawasena akubi-o si-**mas**-u-ka?
 2MH-TOP who-with happy yawn do-ALLOC.H-Q
 ‘With whom do you give a happy yawn?’ (Lyrics by Noriyuki Makihara)
- b. [Ore, tuutyoo mite-no toori okane-no kanri mattaku deki-nai kara]
 I passbook see-GEN as money-GEN management never can-NEG since
omae-ni makase-**mas**-u.
 2MH-DAT trust-ALLOC.H-PRS
 ‘Since, as you can see from my passbook, I cannot ever manage my money, I will leave it up to you.’ (<https://trip-partner.jp/8204>)
- c. Hirot-ta yatu-o **anta**-ni osie-**masi**-ta-yo.
 pick-PST thing-ACC 2MH-DAT teach-ALLOC.H-SFP
 ‘I showed you the thing I had found.’⁴

Most interestingly, honorific allocutivity can also occur with *kisama* and *temee*, which are on the far non-honorific end of the scale in **Table 2**, as shown in (10). We gloss *kisama* and *temee* as NH (non-honorific).

- (10) a. **Kisama**-ni-wa wakar-anai **des**-yoo-ne.
 2NH-DAT-TOP understand-NEG COP.ALLOC.H-EPI-SFP
 ‘You do not understand (this).’
- b. **Temee**-ni-wa kankee nai **des**-u-yone?
 2NH-with-TOP relation absent COP.ALLOC.H-PRS-SFP
 ‘This has nothing to do with you, right?’

In this way, the honorific allocutive marker *-mas/des-* can not only occur with pronouns on the honorific end of the scale but also with pronouns on the mid and low honorific ends. Note that these mismatching examples in (10) are instances of genuine mismatches in honorificity, since they also have literal (and not only sarcastic) readings, as we will elaborate upon in Section 4.

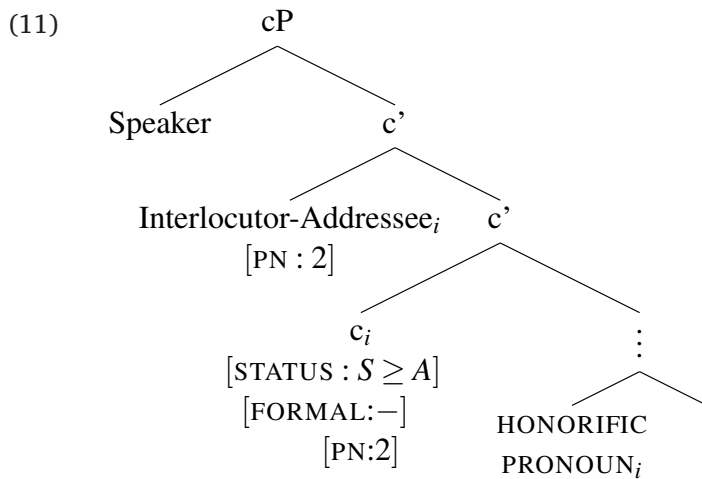
To summarise the cross-linguistic landscape, in languages such as Punjabi, mismatches are completely ungrammatical. An honorific allocutive marker can only occur with an honorific 2P pronoun. By contrast, in languages such as Japanese, the honorific allocutive marker can

⁴ Source: <https://b.2ch2.net/test/read.cgi/zatsudan/1558654553/56i?guid=on>.

co-occur with 2P pronouns of distinct honorific levels. This leads us to the following question: what allows varying (non-)honorific combinations of the allocutive marker and pronouns in Japanese but not in Punjabi?

3 Syntactic approach to honorificity: arguments against its universality

In the spirit of the Performative Hypothesis, which situates information about the speech act and its participants (speaker, addressee) in the clause-periphery (Speas & Tenny 2003; Hill 2007; Miyagawa 2012; 2017, a.o.), Portner et al. (2019) locate honorificity on a functional head in the left-periphery of the clause.



As shown in the representation in (11), the clause-periphery hosts a projection cP. The head of cP has a valued [status] feature, among other honorificity-related features. Following Baker (2008) and Kratzer (2009), 2P pronouns are analyzed as bound elements, which enter syntax without any pre-valued features. These features are acquired in syntax through operator-variable agreement with the Interlocutor argument. When a pronoun is syntactically bound by Interlocutor, mediated by c as a λ -abstractor, it refers to the interlocutor-addressee and reflects the feature values of c. Allocutive markers can be treated as the morphological realization of c, or as a clitic/agreement marker that is associated with the Interlocutor argument merged in the specifier of c. Since both the allocutive marker and 2P pronouns are syntactically dependent on the same Interlocutor/c for honorificity licensing, there is no room for featural mismatching under this approach.

A crucial premise of the above binding based account is that pronouns are functional (and not lexical) items that can be bound. More specifically, it assumes that honorificity must be a feature of pronouns akin to phi-features such as person and number, and not descriptive content. However, as we demonstrate in the rest of this section, this assumption is not correct. The morphosyntax of honorific pronouns varies across languages. While honorificity on

Punjabi 2P pronouns is indeed a formal feature, it corresponds to descriptive content on Japanese pronouns. Thus, honorific 2P pronouns in Punjabi are functional items that may be construed as bound variables, but honorific pronouns in Japanese must be treated as lexical items. The syntactic explanation to banning mismatches between 2P pronouns and allocutive markers is therefore not universal — it can only apply to systems such as Punjabi but not to Japanese.

3.1 Punjabi pronouns

We start with Punjabi. Unlike the Japanese pronominal paradigm in **Table 1**, Punjabi pronouns form a closed class with significantly fewer honorific forms. First, honorific forms are available only for 2P and 3P. There are no 1P honorifics. Secondly, there are only two levels of honorificity in Punjabi (i.e., honorific and non-honorific). This is shown in **Table 3**, where H stands for honorific and NH for non-honorific.

Person	singular	plural
1	maiN	asii
2	tuu (NH)	tusii (H)
3	o (NH)	o (H)

Table 3: Punjabi: pronominal paradigm.

As is also evident from the table, Punjabi re-uses its phi-forms as honorific forms, as is well-known for many Indo-European languages like French, German, Spanish among others. Thus, in addition to its use as a plural 2P pronoun which is insensitive to the (non-)honorificity of the addressee, the form *tusii* is also used to refer to a singular honorific addressee. In contrast, the singular form *tuu* can only refer to a singular non-honorific addressee. Similar facts hold for the 3P plural pronoun in the language *o* which is used to refer to a group of people as well as to refer to a singular honorific third person. The singular 3P pronoun is only used for a non-honorific third person referent.⁵

Akin to the pronominal paradigm, the agreement paradigm in Punjabi also re-uses the phi-agreement forms. Plural pronominal forms, when used for a plural referent, trigger corresponding plural agreement. This is shown for a 2P plural honorific referent in (12a). Notably, the plural pronoun triggers plural agreement on both the verb and the predicative adjective also when used for a singular honorific addressee. This is demonstrated in (12b).

⁵ In the nominative/unmarked case, the 3P singular and plural pronominal forms are homophonous. However, the difference becomes evident in oblique cases. For example, an ergative 3P plural pronoun is realized as *ona-ne* ‘3PL-ERG’ in contrast with the singular form *o-ne* ‘3SG-ERG’.

- (12) a. [Context: A student is appreciating her teachers. She says:]
Tusii (saare) syaane o.
 2PL.NOM all smart.M.PL be.PRS.2PL
 ‘You (all) are smart.’
- b. [Context: A granddaughter is appreciating her grandfather. She says:]
Tusii (*saare) syaane o.
 2PL.NOM (*all) smart.M.PL be.PRS.2PL
 ‘You (*all) are smart.’

Contrast with singular agreement, which obtains only with the singular form *tuu*.

- (13) **Tuu** syaanaa ě.
 2SG.NOM smart.M.SG be.PRS.2SG
 ‘You are smart.’

The same pattern is maintained with the 3P plural form, which always triggers 3P plural agreement, even when used to refer to a singular honorific 3P, as shown in (14a). Singular agreement obtains only with the singular 3P pronoun, as in (14b).

- (14) a. **O** syaane ne.
 3PL.NOM smart.M.PL be.PRS.3PL
 ‘They are smart.’ OR ‘(S)he (honorific) is smart.’
- b. **O** syaanaa e.
 3SG.NOM smart.M.SG be.PRS.3SG
 ‘He is smart.’

In summary, Punjabi only has a two-way distinction in honorificity available only for 2P and 3P. This is easily analyzable by positing positive and negative values of a feature such as [HON]. However, since there is no unique morphology separating the honorific feature from phi-features either in the pronominal or in the agreement make-up, it is worth asking if honorificity even constitutes a distinct feature in Punjabi or if it is purely a matter of interpretation that the plural forms can be interpreted as honorific. We argue that [HON] is a distinct formal feature in the language, where ‘formal’ is defined as follows:

- (15) A feature is formal if it is involved “[...] in inflectional paradigms, or trigger syntactic movement or agreement, or play some other demonstrably formal role” (Cowper & Hall 2014: 146; see also Zeijlstra 2008).

Evidence for a formal encoding of honorificity in Punjabi comes from syncretism in agreement in the feminine paradigm. In Punjabi, the copula only shows person and number inflection. The verbal form inflected for aspect shows gender and number inflection. We show the perfective verbal forms for the verb ‘go’ in **Table 4**. Crucially, note that the table consists of an extra row to present the honorific, singular agreement forms.

Number/gender	masculine	feminine
singular	gayaa	gayii
plural	gaye	gayiyaaN
honorific singular	gaye	gaye

Table 4: Punjabi: perfective verb forms for ‘go.’

As shown in **Table 4**, the masculine plural form *gaye* obtains not only for agreement with a plural subject but also for an honorific singular subject. With a feminine nominal, however, the forms differ across the feminine plural and the honorific singular usage. This is illustrated in the following examples.

- (16) a. Tuu bazaar gayii *sāi*.
 2SG.NOM market go.PFV.F.SG be.PST.2SG
 ‘You went to the market.’ *Singular non-honorific*
- b. Tusii bazaar gayiyāā so.
 2PL.NOM market go.PFV.F.PL be.PST.2PL
 ‘You all went to the market.’ *Plural*
- c. Massii-jii, tusii bazaar {gaye/*gayiyāā} so.
 aunt-H 2PL.NOM market go.PFV.M.PL/go.PFV.F.PL be.PST.2PL
 ‘Aunt, you went to the market.’ *Singular honorific*

As expected, a singular non-honorific feminine subject triggers singular agreement as in (16a), and its plural counterpart, regardless of honorificity, triggers plural agreement, as in (16b). With a singular honorific feminine subject, we expect the feminine plural form *gayiyāā*. However, the agreement form that obtains is syncretic with the masculine plural form, as shown in (16c).

The same pattern is observed across differing aspectual forms of the verb, as well as with predicative adjective. We argue that an analysis of the above-mentioned syncretism between feminine singular honorific and masculine plural agreement necessitates an honorificity based feature in morpho-syntax. To see this, consider an account where morpho-syntax lacks an honorific feature. In such a scenario, the masculine paradigm can be derived in a straightforward way. Regardless of its (non-)honorific interpretation, a nominal specified as masculine plural in syntax triggers plural agreement. This generates the same agreement form across-the-board, regardless of whether it is interpreted as masculine plural honorific, masculine plural non-honorific or masculine singular honorific. In contrast, a noun specified as masculine singular in syntax triggers singular agreement.

- (17) a. [m.sg] ↔ /gayaa/
 b. [m.pl] ↔ /gaye/

However, the same analysis cannot explain the feminine paradigm. Consider (18), where a noun specified as feminine singular in syntax triggers singular agreement, which is correct. However, for a feminine noun specified as plural in syntax, the account only generates *gayiyãã*, which is incorrect.

- (18) a. [f.sg] ↔ /gayii/
 b. [f.pl] ↔ /gayiyãã/

We propose an alternative solution which employs a (non-)honorific feature in syntax. Two revisions are proposed: first, feminine is the marked gender feature with masculine being unmarked. Secondly, in addition to their phi-specifications, the nominal and agreement forms also bear honorific specifications via a [HON] feature. In Punjabi, it can have two possible values: + or –, where the former indicates that the addressee is honorific to the speaker, while the latter shows that he/she is not. Given these two modifications, consider the following rules of Vocabulary Insertion/VI for masculine agreement forms.

- (19) a. [sg, -HON] ↔ /gayaa/
 b. [pl, +HON] ↔ /gaye/
 c. [pl, -HON] ↔ /gaye/
 d. [sg, +HON] ↔ /gaye/

For the feminine agreement forms, the following VI rules apply.

- (20) a. [f, sg, -HON] ↔ /gayii/
 b. [f, pl, -HON] ↔ /gayiyãã/

For the [f, sg, +HON] bundle, we propose that the marked feminine feature is deleted in the presence of the [sg, +HON] bundle. This is shown via the impoverishment rule in (21). The only lexical item that can be inserted to realise the subsequent feature bundle is *gaye*.

- (21) *[FEM] on the same complex node as [sg, +HON]

- (22) [sg, +HON] ↔ /gaye/

Thus, unless we assume that Punjabi has a distinct formal [HON] feature visible in morpho-syntax, the syncretism between feminine singular honorific agreement and masculine plural/honorific agreement cannot be explained. This feature can be positively or negatively specified, yielding a two-way honorificity distinction.

3.2 Japanese pronouns

In contrast with Punjabi, pronouns constitute an open class in Japanese — there are numerous 2P forms that vary for honorificity, as we saw earlier in Section 2.2. In this section, we show that honorificity on pronouns in Japanese corresponds to descriptive content, in sharp contrast with the Punjabi system.

Recall from **Table 1** in Section 2.1.2 that pronouns in Japanese vary in the person feature, and in the gender feature for 3P. This is not unlike the better-studied Germanic and Romance linguistic systems. However, Japanese pronouns stand out with regard to the range of (non-) honorific forms they have for each person specification. For instance, in the 2nd person, the language has, at least, ten forms, which vary for honorificity. Given this large number of pronouns, we examine if honorificity in Japanese is encoded via a formal feature, making the pronoun a functional item, or if honorificity is descriptive content, making the pronoun a lexical item on a par with nouns like ‘cat’, ‘dog’ etc.

To this end, we first try to identify one (or more) suitable honorificity-related feature(s). Distinct values of the honorific features should differentiate all forms of 2P pronouns. If this is not tenable, it would indicate that Japanese pronouns are lexical items — they consist of the person feature, and honorificity as descriptive content. As is evident, a feature like [HON] employed for honorific systems like Punjabi cannot be extended directly to Japanese. This is because [HON] is limited to two values (i.e., positive/negative), which yields only two distinct pronouns. Therefore, we adopt the [status] feature from Kim-Renaud & Pak (2006). Proposed initially for Korean, the [status] feature encodes a hierarchical relation between the speaker and addressee and can have five different values (less than, less than or equal to, equal to, greater than or equal to, greater than). Ignoring the archaic forms and focusing on the following eight pronouns in Japanese for now (*omae*, *kisama*, *kimi*, *anata*, *anta*, *sotti*, *temee*, and *sotira*), we observe that the values of the [status] feature would yield 5 distinct spellout forms, which do not suffice to explain the availability of 8 distinct 2P singular forms. Furthermore, 2P pronouns in Japanese do not vary for the values of the [status] feature. As shown in **Table 5**, six of the eight pronominal forms end up having the same specification for [status] in that they can be used by a speaker who is in a superior position to the addressee. With *sotti*, the speaker can also be equal to the addressee in status, and with *sotira*, (s)he may be inferior.

Pronoun	person	status
kisama	2	Sp > Adr
temee	2	Sp > Adr
omae	2	Sp > Adr
anta	2	Sp > Adr
kimi	2	Sp > Adr
sotti	2	Sp > / = Adr
sotira	2	Sp > / < Adr
anata	2	Sp > Adr

Table 5: Japanese: [status] in pronouns.

Thus, [status] alone does not suffice to demarcate the 2P forms from each other. Let us entertain the possibility of an additional feature [politeness], which, regardless of the [status] of the speaker, encodes his/her intent to be polite to the addressee. It has two possible values: [Politeness: +/-], where + encodes the intent of the speaker to show respect and – indicates the lack of this intent. Various combinations of [status] and [politeness] would yield 10 distinct possibilities of spell-out, which should be enough to accommodate 8 pronouns. However, even this does not suffice to demarcate the pronouns, as shown in **Table 6**, where the top five forms end up with identical features.

Pronoun	person	status	politeness
kisama	2	Sp > Adr	–
temee	2	Sp > Adr	–
omae	2	Sp > Adr	–
anta	2	Sp > Adr	–
kimi	2	Sp > Adr	–
sotti	2	Sp > / = Adr	+ / –
sotira	2	Sp > / < Adr	+
anata	2	Sp > Adr	+

Table 6: Japanese: [status] and [politeness] in pronouns.

We can keep trying this experiment with more honorificity-related features. However, it is worth noting that the meanings that can disambiguate 2P pronouns valued identically for [status] and [politeness] do not seem translatable into a non-descriptive feature at all. To illustrate, consider *omae* and *anta* — both forms are sensitive to status and are typically uttered when Sp > Adr, and do not encode the Sp’s intent to be polite. The distinction between these two forms is loosely related to the speaker’s gender: *anta* seems to be used more often by a female speaker, and *omae* by a male. This gender based distinction, however, is not borne out in all instances. Moreover, note that this gender distinction corresponds to the gender of the speaker, and not the individual picked by the 2P feature (i.e., the addressee). Hence, positing a gender feature in these two pronouns cannot be correct. Similarly, take *kisama*, which differs from *temee* with regard to the degree of offensiveness it brings and the specificity of the situation it can be used in (it is typically used in quarrels). Another meaning which demarcates some pronouns from others is the self-image that the speaker is trying to portray. For instance, by using *kimi*, the speaker attempts to project a noble/sophisticated image of him/herself, which is distinct from the use of *anta*, which emphasises the speaker’s humble background. Such meanings are clearly concept-denoting. Based on this discussion, we claim that honorificity in Japanese pronouns is not encoded via a formal feature,

but is instead descriptive in nature. Japanese pronouns, subsequently are lexical items. All 2P pronouns bear the same formal feature (i.e., 2P) — this should only yield one 2P pronominal form. However, given the descriptive nature of honorificity (a label used to denote a range of complex meanings) also hosted on the 2P pronouns, the language allows for a large class of 2P pronouns, which are distinguished from each other via their varying honorificity related meanings.

Prima facie, this finding seems incompatible with the syntactic nature of object honorification/OH, which bears all characteristics of Agree. We make a small digression in the following subsection to show that the descriptive nature of honorificity on pronouns can be reconciled with OH.

3.2.1 Reconciliation with object-honorification

Japanese has an OH construction, which is used when the object refers to a person who is respected by the speaker (Niinuma 2003; Yamada 2019; Ikawa 2021; Ikawa & Yamada to appear). The sentence in (23a) is the plain, baseline example. In the presence of a non-honorific object, the verb does not host any OH morphology. In contrast, in the presence of an honorific object in (23b), the verb bears distinct morphology to encode the speaker's respect towards the referent of the direct object.

- (23) Object-honorific construction
- a. John-ga Akira-o sagasi-masi-ta.
John-NOM Akira-ACC look for-ALLOC.H-PST
'John looked for Akira (non-honorific).'
- b. John-ga sensei-o **osagasisi**-masi-ta.
John-NOM teacher-ACC look for.OH-ALLOC.H-PST
'John looked for the teacher (honorific).'

As shown by Ikawa (2021), the availability of OH also requires that not only the speaker but also the subject of the clause honor the individual denoted by the object. Thus, if the subject of the clause is superior to the object, OH cannot be used. For instance, in (23b), if John is the college principle who is superior to the object (i.e., teacher), OH would be infelicitous.⁶

⁶ A reviewer points out that for OH to obtain, the subject must be the speaker, or an entity that the speaker is associated with. Thus, (i) with OH on the verb is infelicitous unless the speaker belongs to the newspaper company.

- (i) Asahi-sinbun-ga sensei-ni gorenrakusi-ta
Asahi-newspaper-NOM teacher-DAT communicate.OH-PST
'Asahi Newspaper contacted the teacher (infelicitous unless the speaker belongs to the newspaper company).'

All native speakers that we consulted judged the example as felicitous, independently of the speaker's relation to the newspaper. Thus, at least for a set of Japanese speakers, the subject and the speaker do not need to be related in some way for OH to obtain. As long as they honor the referent of the object NP independently, OH can obtain (unlike an addressee-honorific upgrader, as discussed in Ikawa & Yamada 2021).

In the presence of a speaker and a subject that honor the referent denoted by the object, there are several structural requirements that must be met for OH to obtain (Boeckx & Niinuma 2004; Hasegawa 2017; Yamada 2019; Ikawa 2021; Ikawa 2022 a.o.). First, if the object pronoun is an adjunct and not an object argument of the verb, OH cannot take place even if the speaker and the subject honor the referent of the object. To elaborate, in Japanese, the *to*-marked phrase can either be a complement or an adjunct. Consider the sentences below.

(24) Complement-adjunct distinction

- a. Taroo-wa anata-to oaisi-ta.
 Taroo-TOP 2H-with meet.OH-PST
 ‘Taroo met you.’
- b. Taroo-wa anata-to Hanako-o {#otasuke/tasuke}-ta.
 Taroo-TOP 2H-with Hanako-ACC help.OH/help-PST
 ‘Taroo helped Hanako with you.’⁷

In (24a), the verb *oaisi* ‘meet’ selects a *to*-marked complement. In contrast, in (24b), the verb *tasuke* ‘help’ selects an *o*-marked accusative object. The *to*-marked phrase in this sentence is an adjunct — it describes the person with whom Taroo participated in the helping event. It is possible to use OH for the direct object in (24a) since it is the complement. By contrast, if the direct object *Hanako* is non-honorific, OH is not possible in (24b) even if the speaker and subject respect the individual denoted by the 2P pronoun in the adjunct position.⁸

The second structural factor that OH is sensitive to pertains to the phase condition. OH in the matrix verb cannot associate with an honorific object argument in the embedded clause, as shown in the following example from Ikawa (2021).

⁷ We use a # in place of an * for the judgment. This is because of the beneficiary effect (aka. *Hishaitaiguu*; Kikuchi 1997; Yamada 2019): an OH is permitted when the sentence is interpreted as if there is a covert benefactive/applicative referent, thanks to whom the event described by the sentence is carried out.

⁸ A reviewer asks if the possibility of OH with PPs in Japanese is compatible with a syntactic account. We think that it is, due to the following reasons: first, the adpositional phrases which can control agreement are all instances of (argumental) ‘datives’ selected by the verb. *ni*-datives occur with ditransitive verbs such as ‘lend’, ‘give’, *kara*-phrases occur with ‘receive’ and ‘borrow’ and *to*-phrases with ‘talk’, ‘meet’ and ‘look for’ (Boeckx & Niinuma 2004). Secondly, adpositional phrases which occupy true adjunct positions, as in (24b), do not control object agreement. Lastly, agreement with selected PPs also seems to be attested in other languages — in Warlpiri, ergative marked arguments can control agreement, just like an unmarked subject, as shown in (i). Under the adpositional treatment of the ergative marker in Warlpiri (e.g., Markman & Grashchenkov 2012), this shows that the verb can undergo agreement with argumental PPs in some languages.

(i) *Warlpiri*

Ngaju-rlu ka-rna-ngku nyuntu nya-nyi.
 I-ERG PRS-1SUBJ-2OBJ you see-NPST
 ‘I see you.’

(Hale 1983: 18)

(25) Phase condition

Taroo-wa [**anata**-ga o-kirei da-to] {***oomoisi**/omot}-ta.
 Taroo-TOP 2H-NOM H-beautiful COP-that think.OH/think-PST
 ‘Taroo thought (OH) [you were beautiful].’

Finally, object honorifics (OH) in Japanese are sensitive to intervention effects in ditransitives (Niinuma 2003; Boeckx & Niinuma 2004; Ikawa 2022; Ikawa & Yamada to appear, among others). Specifically, in the presence of an indirect object (IO), which is non-human, the OH can be associated with the honorific direct object (DO), as in (26a). However, in the presence of a human IO, the relation between the OH and the DO fails to be established, as in (26b).

- (26) a. Hanako-ga gakkai-kyoosetu-ni **anata**-o oturesi-ta.
 Hanako-NOM conference room-DAT 2H-ACC take.OH-PST
 ‘Hanako took (OH) you to the conference room.’
 b. #Hanako-ga doroboo-ni **anata**-o gosyookaisi-ta.
 Hanako-NOM thief-DAT 2H-ACC introduce.OH-PST
 ‘Hanako introduced (OH) you to the thief.’

We should note that the presence of an honorific argument in the IO position, with the DO being non-honorific can also generate OH. For instance, if *anata* were in the IO position with ‘thief’ being the DO, OH would be allowed, as is shown in (27).⁹

⁹ A reviewer points out that an item that triggers object agreement does not always participate in intervention, using the sentences below. As shown in (ia), the object-honorific marking targets the *ni*-marked element. In (ib), the OH marking targets the accusative object and the *ni*-marked item does not intervene. This contrasts sharply with (26b) in the current paper, where the *ni*-marked dative argument intervenes for OH with the accusative object.

- (i) a. watasi-wa [sensei-no otaku]-ni ukagat-ta
 I-TOP teacher-GEN house-LOC visit.OH-PST
 ‘I visited the teacher’s house.’
 b. watasi-wa [watasi-no uti]-ni sensei-o oyobisi-ta.
 I-TOP I-GEN house-to teacher-ACC invite.OH-PST
 ‘I invited the teacher to my house.’

We show that the difference between (ib) and (26b) wrt intervention by the *ni*-phrase further supports the syntactic approach. First of all, the reviewer assumes that the *ni*-marked phrase in (ia) and (ib) are structurally the same. However, we demonstrate that this premise is not correct. While the *ni*-marked phrase in (ia) is a DP that is visible for syntactic processes such as agreement, the *ni*-marked phrase in (ib) is a PP adjunct. Consequently, it is not active for agreement or intervention in syntax. The status of the *ni*-phrases as DP/PP is testable via quantifier float. In Japanese, a numeral quantifier may float off its host only if the host is a DP (Shibatani 1998). We find that the *ni*-marked phrase in (ia) allows quantifier float but this is not permissible for the *ni*-marked phrase in (ib).

- (ii) a. Watasi-wa [sensee-no otaku]-ni **san-gen** ukagat-ta.
 I-TOP teacher-GEN house-ni three-CL visit.OH-PST
 ‘(I) made a visit to three houses of the teacher.’

- (27) Hanako-ga **anata-ni doroboo-o gosyookaisi-ta.**
 Hanako-NOM 2H-DAT thief-ACC introduce.OH-PST
 ‘Hanako introduced (OH) the thief to you.’

Given that the target of honorification is sensitive to several syntactic factors, it is reasonable to conclude that OH involves *Agree* (Niinuma 2003; Boeckx & Niinuma 2004). A purely pragmatic approach cannot explain OH. This finding seems incompatible with our proposal that honorificity on Japanese pronouns is descriptive. Indeed, earlier syntactic accounts of OH have assumed a formal [HON] feature on the object which undergoes agreement with *v* (Niinuma 2003; Boeckx & Niinuma 2004). However, recent work by Ikawa (2022) clearly demonstrates that, although syntactic, OH in Japanese does not underlie agreement between the probe and the object in a [HON] feature. Instead OH is the result of agreement in an index feature.

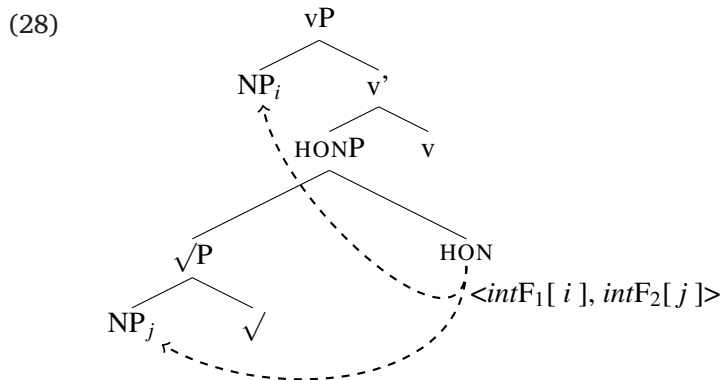
To elaborate, following Ikawa & Yamada (to appear), Ikawa (2022) proposes that the functional head that participates in OH is HON^0 situated below *v*. HON^0 contains two interpretable but unvalued index features, labeled as *intF1*[] and *intF2*[]. All animate nouns and pronouns bear an index (*i,j,k* and so on) that can value the index feature on HON^0 . Note that use of the index feature as participating in agreement is not new; for differing versions of this feature, see Hicks (2009), Kratzer (2009), a.o.. Assuming bidirectional *Agree* (e.g., Baker 2008), the feature *intF1*[] probes downward to be valued by the index feature of the closest animate object while *intF2*[] probes upward to be valued by the index feature on the subject within the same phase. This values HON^0 with the indices that the object and the subject bear respectively.

-
- b. *Watasi-wa [watasi-no uti]-ni sensei-o **san-gen** oyobisi-ta.
 I-TOP I-GEN house-to teacher-ACC three-CL invite.OH-PST
 ‘I invited the teacher to three of my houses (intended).’

Thus, the *ni*-marked phrase in (ib) is a PP. Moreover, it is also an adjunct, i.e., it is not selected by the verb *oyobisi*, which is better glossed as ‘call’ and not ‘invite’. Since it is a PP-adjunct (as opposed to a DP or an argumental PP), it does not intervene or agree. Now, let us contrast this with the *ni*-marked phrase in (26b), which is an animate goal of a double object construction/DOC. It is well-known from the literature (e.g., Miyagawa & Tsujioka 2004) that the animate goal of a DOC is a DP. Evidence for this comes from quantifier float, as in (iii). Since the *ni*-marked phrase in an example such as (26b) is a DP, it is predicted to intervene for OH between the verb and the direct object.

- (iii) Taroo-ga gakusei-ni **futa-ri** nimotu-o okutta.
 Taro-NOM students-DAT 2-CL package-ACC sent
 ‘Taro sent two students a package.’ (Miyagawa 1989)

Based on the above discussion, it is clear that the distinct intervention behavior seen for the *ni*-marked phrase in (ib) versus the *ni*-marked phrase in (26b) are due to the DP v/s PP status of these phrases, which is a syntactic distinction. This lends further support to the syntactic analysis of OH in Japanese.



The feature on HON^0 are interpretable, which allows them to survive the syntactic derivation. They are parts of the semantic representation of HON^0 , as shown below.

(29) Sp honors $[[NP_{intF_1[]}]]$ in the actual world \wedge $[[NP_{intF_2[]}]]$ honors $[[NP_{intF_1[]}]]$ in the described situation

In summary, honorificity on Japanese pronouns is descriptive content, which is inactive in syntax. This finding is not at odds with the syntactic nature of OH if OH is treated as agreement in the index feature, in line with Ikawa (2022).

3.3 Functional versus lexical pronouns: consequences for binding

So far, we have seen that honorificity in Punjabi pronouns is a formal feature on par with phi-features, while it is descriptive content in Japanese pronouns. Given the composition of Punjabi pronouns, which contain only formal features (person, number and honorificity), we propose that they are functional items. More specifically, we follow the analysis of Abney (1987) to propose that pronouns in Punjabi are intransitive determiners. There is no N head since the pronoun lacks descriptive content. We provide a structure for the non-honorific singular 2P pronoun *tuu* in (30). The DP lacks an NP, with the D head hosting all relevant features.

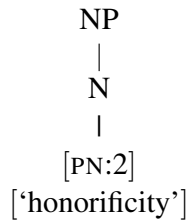
(30) Punjabi

$$\begin{array}{c}
 \text{DP} \\
 | \\
 \text{D} \\
 | \\
 [-\text{HON}] \\
 [\text{PERS}:2] \\
 [\text{NUM}:SG]
 \end{array}$$

In contrast with Punjabi, honorificity on 2P pronouns in Japanese is treated as descriptive content. We follow Noguchi's (1997) N-pronoun analysis of Japanese 3P pronouns to claim that Japanese pronouns are NPs. The descriptive content of 2P pronouns i.e., honorificity, is situated

on N. Furthermore, following Rouveret (1991), we also situate the person feature on N. The structure is shown in (31).¹⁰

(31) Japanese



The N-pronoun analysis for 2P pronouns in Japanese predicts nominal-like behavior of 2P pronouns in Japanese, which is borne out. First, some Japanese 2P pronouns clearly show an etymological relation with common nouns. For example, *temee* is etymologically a N-N compound, decomposable into *te* ‘hand’ and *mae* ‘front,’ and originally means ‘front of (my) hand’ (i.e., ‘a person in front of me/your (my/your hand)’). It is natural to assume that these distinct morphemes in honorific pronouns gradually became unanalyzable to an extent that they are now seen as a single word (Vovin 2003: 95; Frellesvig 2010: 245-246). Secondly, it is well-known that 3P pronouns in Japanese, like nouns, can be modified by a demonstrative, an adjective and a relative clause (Kuroda 1965: 105; Noguchi 1997: 777). We show that just like 3P pronouns, 1P and 2P pronouns can also be modified in the language. The 2P pronoun *anata* can be modified by a demonstrative and an adjective, as in (32a), and by a demonstrative and a relative-clause like structure, as in (32b).

- (32) a. ano kasikoi **anata**
 that smart you
 ‘that smart you’
- b. ano [atama-ga ii] **anata**
 that head-NOM good you
 ‘that you who is smart’

Thus, based on the formal v/s descriptive nature of honorificity on pronouns, 2P pronouns in Punjabi are DPs but those in Japanese are NPs. If our D versus N-pronoun analysis of Punjabi and Japanese pronouns is on the right track, we expect to see differences in their binding patterns. The functional (D/phi) versus lexical status of 3P pronouns has been tied to their binding ability in the literature (Noguchi 1997; Déchaine & Wiltschko 2002; Koak 2008, among others). For instance, pronouns in English are functional which allows them to be construed as a bound variable, as is shown in (33). Similar observation has been made for Shuswap pronouns, analysed

¹⁰ As a notational practice, we use [HON] to refer to the formal honorific feature, and [‘honorificity’] to indicate the descriptive content.

as functional items (Déchaine & Wiltschko 2002), as in (34). In contrast, pronouns which are lexical in nature cannot be construed as bound variables. This is well-known for the Japanese 3P pronoun *kare*, as in (35) (Saito & Hoji 1983; Hoji 1991; Noguchi 1997 etc.).

(33) Everyone_i likes his_i father.

(34) *Shuswap*

[Xwexwéyt]_i re swet xwis-t-0-és [newt7-s]_i re qe7tse-s_i.
 all DET who like-TRANS-3SG.OBJ-3SG.SUBJ EMPH-3 DET father-3.POSS
 ‘Everyone_i likes his_i father.’ (Lai 1998, as cited in Déchaine & Wiltschko 2002)

(35) *Daremo_i-ga kare_i-no hahaoya-o aisite-iru.
 everyone-NOM he-GEN mother-ACC love-PRS
 ‘Everyone_i loves his_i mother.’ (Noguchi 1997: 770)

Since the 2P pronoun in Japanese is lexical, it should not be possible to construe these pronouns as bound variables. For Punjabi, the prediction is not so clear since being a functional item is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for an item to be construed as a variable. To see what a bound variable reading of 1P/2P pronouns looks like, consider the following illustration from English in (36) (Rullman 2004; Kratzer 2009, among others).

(36) Only you did your homework.
 • Referential paraphrase: Nobody else did your homework.
 • Bound variable paraphrase: Nobody else did their homework.

We observe that Japanese 2P pronouns cannot obtain a bound variable reading. As shown in (37), the possessive 2P pronoun can only receive a referential interpretation. To obtain a bound reading, the reflexive *zibun* must be employed instead. Bound construals of 2P pronouns are also unavailable in relative clauses, (38).

(37) a. **Anata**-dake-ga **anata**-no heya-ni i-ru.
 2H-only-NOM 2H-GEN room-in be-PRS
 ‘Only you stay in your room.’ (√ referential; *bound)
 b. **Anata**-dake-ga **zibun**-no heya-ni i-ru.
 2H-only-NOM self-GEN room-in be-PST
 ‘Only you stay in your room.’ (√ bound)

(38) **Anata**-ga [**anata**-no heya-ni i-ru] yuitu-no ningen da.
 2H-NOM 2H-GEN room-in be-PRS only-GEN man COP
 ‘You are the only person who is in your room.’ (√referential, *bound)

In Punjabi, sentences such as ‘only you did your homework’ with a 2P possessive pronoun do not allow a bound reading; a reflexive is needed instead.

- (39) a. ?Sirf tuu teraa kamm kittaa e.
 only 2SG.NOM 2SG.POSS work do.PFV.M.SG be.PRS
 ‘Only you have done your work.’ (✓ referential; *bound)
- b. Sirf tuu apnaa kamm kittaa e.
 only 2SG.NOM self work do.PFV.M.SG be.PRS
 ‘Only you have done your work.’ (✓ bound)

However, there are certain instances, where the bound construal of a 1P/2P pronoun is available. Consider the following example with a 1P plural pronoun, based on Rullman (2004).¹¹

- (40) Saanuu lagdaa e ki asii syaane āā.
 1PL.DAT feel.M.PL be.PRS that 1PL.NOM smart be.PRS.1PL
 Referential reading: ‘Each of us feels that we (speaker and his/her associates) are smart.’
 Bound variable reading: ‘Each of us feels that he/she is smart.’

To summarise, 2P pronouns in Punjabi are functional items that may participate in syntactic binding. This makes the syntactic approach a live possibility to explain the ban on honorific mismatches in the language.¹²

However, the syntactic approach to banning mismatching honorificity (Portner et al. 2019), which requires pronouns to be bound by *c*, cannot be extended to Japanese. Japanese 2P pronouns are lexical items that cannot be construed as bound variables. Since Japanese pronouns cannot be bound by a syntactic *c*-like head, the honorific specification of pronouns is syntactically independent of that on the allocutive marker. This, in principle, makes room for honorific mismatches between 2P pronouns and allocutivity in Japanese.

4 Towards a pragmatic approach to mismatches in Japanese

If the difference in honorific mismatching were purely due to syntax, the contrast between Punjabi and Japanese would be easy to explain: in Punjabi, pronouns need to be syntactically bound by *c*, which also licenses allocutivity, making matching obligatory. In contrast, in Japanese, there is no syntactic binding of pronouns, allowing 2P pronouns to mismatch with honorific allocutivity.

However, this is not such a simple matter: it remains unexplained why the two distinct honorific meanings from a non-honorific 2P pronoun and an honorific allocutive marker in Japanese do not conflict in pragmatics. To see this problem better, consider the sentence in (41).

¹¹ We leave a closer examination of the conditions under which bound construals of pronouns in Punjabi are possible, for future work.

¹² The ban on mismatches in Punjabi can also be explained via pragmatics — if the 2P pronoun and the allocutive marker host the same [HON] feature, pragmatics would require all tokens of that feature to have the same value in a sentence, failing which, incompatible requirements would be placed on the context, leading to a ban on mismatches.

(41) #I am 2 inches taller than my father, and I am also 2 inches shorter than my father.

This sentence is grammatical, but is infelicitous, because each clause delivers contradicting information. As an analogy, even if the mismatch in Japanese is syntactically allowed, we would predict that the mismatching sentence containing a non-honorific 2P pronoun and an honorific allocutive marker is filtered out post-syntactically. Nevertheless, a mismatch is allowed in Japanese. Why is this language so flexible?

4.1 Previous approaches to Japanese honorificity

In the formal semantics literature on honorificity, researchers have proposed a consistency rule to explain matching among honorific items in a clause (Potts & Kawahara 2004; Potts 2007; McCready 2014; 2019). For illustration, we consider McCready (2014), who proposes that (i) each honorific expression is assigned a particular honorific range (e.g., Hon_1), and (ii) the honorific level of the entire sentence is calculated as an average of all expressions used in the sentence, unless the intervals have empty interactions (ibid., 508), as shown below.¹³

$$(42) \quad Hon(S) = \begin{cases} [\frac{\min(1)+\dots+\min(n)}{n}, \frac{\max(1)+\dots+\max(n)}{n}], & \text{if } Hon_1 \sqcap Hon_2 \sqcap \dots \sqcap Hon_n \neq \emptyset \\ 0, & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

Under this view, “high and low-level items cannot be used together, though combinations of high and mid-level items are possible, as are combinations of mid- and low-level items (ibid., 508).”

McCready (2019: Ch.7), however, proposes a slightly different view from the above analysis. While maintaining the conditional rule in (42) as a general principle for honorific expressions (McCready 2019: 32), she explicitly analyzes Japanese pronouns as not encoding intervals but something different, distinguishing them from those found in other honorific languages (e.g., Thai). She motivates this treatment based on the observation that 1P pronouns of a low politeness register and 2P pronouns of a high politeness register can coexist within the same sentence in Japanese but not in Thai (McCready 2019: 110). If we consider that both pronouns merely denote an interval in Japanese, we wrongly predict that there is no overlap in politeness register and conclude that such sentences are unacceptable. Thus, rather than directly specifying the register, she hypothesizes that pronouns “carry information relevant to register assignment” — more specifically, the speaker expectations and commitments relating to the social behavior of the conversational participants — and let the register specification be done via pragmatic inference.

¹³ In McCready (2019: 32), she uses ‘undefined’ in place of 0 for the second condition.

To see the implementation of her system for Japanese, consider the following example:

- (43) **Anata-wa ore-no titioya des-u.**
 2H-TOP 1-GEN father COP.ALLOC.H-PRS
 ‘You are my father.’

For the at-issue meaning, we obtain the proposition that the addressee is the father of the speaker ($father(a_c, s_c)$). For the expressive dimension, we have three pieces of information; (i) the 2P pronoun *anata* indicates that the speaker makes public an expectation that they will behave formally or somewhat formally toward the addressee ($mid_2 \vee high_2$); (ii) the 1P pronoun *ore* indicates that the speaker makes public that they do not expect formal behavior from the addressee toward them (low_1); and (iii) the allocutive marker denotes an politeness interval for a high register (e.g., 0.6 to 1.0). Thus, we have the set of meanings as shown below.

$$(44) \quad \langle father(a_c, s_c), \left\{ \begin{array}{l} low_1, \\ mid_2 \vee high_2, \\ Hon = [.6, 1) \end{array} \right\} \rangle$$

In the above example, low_1 and $mid_2 \vee high_2$ are semantic objects of the same type, and they differ from the semantic type ($Hon = [.6, 1)$). Since the meanings low_1 and register ($Hon = [.6, 1)$) are different semantic objects, there is no conflict in meaning. Despite being of the same type, low_1 and $mid_2 \vee high_2$ are also compatible, because the former is the expectation about the addressee’s behavior toward the speaker, and the latter is about the speaker’s behavior toward the addressee. Under such an analysis where mismatching expressive meanings of two semantic objects that are of distinct types (1P pronoun and allocutive marker above) does not cause conflict, one may predict that mismatching instances between 2P pronouns and allocutive markers are also accepted. But McCready (2019) observes that a sentence as in (45a) is infelicitous: it lacks a literal reading, and can only be interpreted sarcastically. To explain this, she proposes that the low_2 and $Hon = [.6, 1)$ are in fact comparable, and have no overlapping range in intervals (McCready 2019: 120).¹⁴

- (45) a. #**Temee-wa tensai des-u.**
 2NH-TOP genius COP.ALLOC.H-PRS
 ‘You are a genius (intended).’
 b. $\langle genius(a_c), \left\{ \begin{array}{l} low_2, \\ Hon = [.6, 1) \end{array} \right\} \rangle$

She explains: “the fact of a high register implies that the speaker should behave formally, given ordinary social obligations [...]; this is not compatible with the content of [*temee*], which indicates

¹⁴ In her original analysis, she uses an addressee-honorific upgrader *gozai-*, instead of *des-*. We use the sentence in (45a) because the choice does not affect the discussion and it has the simpler form.

an absolute lack of commitment to formal behavior by the speaker and in addition insults the addressee [...] (ibid. 120–122).”

If this is the case, why are the mismatching examples in (10) (repeated below in (46)) felicitous? This comparison is the subject matter of the next subsection.

- (46) a. **Kisama**-ni-wa wakar-anai **des**-yoo-ne.
 2NH-DAT-TOP understand-NEG COP.ALLOC.H-will-SFP
 ‘You do not understand (this).’
- b. **Temee**-ni-wa kankee nai **des**-u-yone?
 2NH-with-TOP relation absent COP.ALLOC.H-PRS-SFP
 ‘This has nothing to do with you, right?’

4.2 Literal readings in mismatching sentences

In McCready’s work, the mismatch between a 2P pronoun and the allocutive marker is at the heart of a non-literal/sarcastic reading. Although the sarcastic interpretation is not detailed upon in her work, we entertain a possible sarcastic interpretation, naturally derived from her analysis. Consider the following example from English¹⁵:

- (47) Do you want to go to San Francisco? I think that it is a very ugly and boring place.
 (shrugging) Okay, I’ll drive you to beautiful San Francisco tomorrow.

In the above example, the meaning contributed by ‘beautiful’ (which is arguably not-at-issue, ‘beautiful’ being non-restrictive here) is the opposite of that contributed by the use of ‘ugly’ in the first part of the speaker’s utterance. This makes the whole utterance inconsistent at the level of literal meaning. However, the use of ‘ugly’ clarifies that the speaker is using ‘beautiful’ sarcastically, not being committed to its truth (opting out from the Gricean Quality maxim). The sentence is thereby consistent under a sarcastic reading.

On a par, the use of *-mas/des-* in the same sentence that contains a non-honorific pronoun such as *kisama* or *temee*, as in (45a) leads to inconsistency at the level of literal meaning since one item is treated as an honorific expression and the other as non-honorific. Like the use of ‘ugly’ and ‘boring’ in (47), the use of *temee* shows that the speaker is not observing the Maxim of Quality for the moment. That is, although the speaker uses *-mas/des-*, she is not committed to its truth. Instead, *-mas/des-* is being used sarcastically with its inverted meaning to convey the lack of politeness.

Although plausible at first, this line of reasoning is not correct. It predicts that in the case of a mismatch, the meaning of one of the honorific items (typically, the one positively specified for honorificity, i.e., *-mas/des-*) is inverted. However, under the sarcastic reading for the sentence

¹⁵ We would like to thank a reviewer for this example.

in (45a), it is the meaning of ‘genius’ that is inverted. Both honorific items retain their meaning — the 2P pronoun *temee* retains its non-honorific meaning, and *-mas/des-* continues to indicate speaker’s politeness. This reading is provided in (48). The same facts obtain with a mismatching structure containing *kisama* and *-mas/des-*.

(48) Available sarcastic reading

- (i) You are not a genius. (the at-issue meaning)
- (ii) The speaker expresses a negative attitude towards the addressee, and the speaker is higher in social status than the addressee (< *temee*).
- (iii) The speaker is polite. (< *des-*)

This shows that a mismatching 2P pronoun and allocutive marker are in principle compatible under their sincere meanings in a clause. Instead, it is the presence of ‘genius’ which gives rise to sarcasm, potentially because it denotes the extreme end of a normatively-loaded scale, and is thereby a natural target for sarcasm. Sarcastic inversion applied to ‘genius’ like items contributes a value at the scale’s extreme other end (e.g., Camp 2012).

If we are on the right track and sarcasm is not due to the mismatching pronoun and allocutive marker, we make three predictions: (a) we should optionally obtain a literal reading for (45a) (*pace* McCready 2019), as in the English sentence *You are a genius*, where ‘genius’ can be interpreted both literally and sarcastically, (b) a sarcastic reading should also obtain with a matching 2P pronoun and *-mas/des-* in the presence of an evaluative predicate such as ‘genius’ and (c) replacing genius with a non-evaluative predicate in a mismatching sentence should yield literal readings with more ease. All of these predictions are borne out.

First, let us begin with a context where (45a) can be used literally.¹⁶ Consider a speaker who is generally hostile towards X and addresses him via *temee*. In a specific situation, the speaker is completely amazed by the achievement of X: in such a situation, the utterance of the sentence in (45a) by the speaker truly means that the addressee is a ‘genius’. She continues to use *temee* because she cannot change the convention used up until then. While there is some weakening in the negative nuance conveyed by *temee*, it can still not be interpreted as polite. The meaning of *-mas/des-* as a politeness marker is maintained as well.

¹⁶ For Japanese speakers who may find the sentence in (45a) degraded, it is possible to add a mood marker to make the sentence more natural, as given in (i). The addition of the mood marker has no consequence for our main claim since (i), like (45a), can have both a literal and a sarcastic reading.

(i) **Temee**-wa hontoni tensai nan **des**-u-ne.
 2NH-TOP really genius MOOD COP.ALLOC.H-PRS-SFP
 ‘You are really a genius.’

- (49) Available literal reading
- (i) You are a genius. (the at-issue meaning)
 - (ii) There is a negative attitude towards the addressee, and the speaker is higher in social status than the addressee (< *temee*)
 - (iii) the speaker is polite. (< *des-*)

Secondly, a sarcastic reading also obtains with the predicate ‘genius’ in a sentence containing two expressions that match in honorificity, such as *anata* and *-mas/des-*, as shown in (50). Imagine a context where the addressee did something foolish. Instead of accusing the addressee directly, the speaker can utter the following sentence with ‘genius’ to convey the opposite meaning.

- (50) **Anata**-wa tensai **des**-u.
 2H-TOP genius COP.ALLOC.H-PRS
 ‘You are a genius.’

Finally, we show that replacing the evaluative predicate with a non-evaluative one in a mismatching sentence yields literal readings freely. Consider our examples in (51a), which contain a non-evaluative predicate such as ‘understand’, which is standardly not taken to evoke normative scales. The sentence in (51a) is a mismatching example, with *temee* and *des-* in the presence of ‘understand’. In contrast, the matching sentence in (51b) with the same predicate contains *anata* and *des-*.

- (51) a. **Temee**-ni-wa watasi-no kuroo-wa wakar-anai **des**-yoo-ne.
 2NH-DAT-TOP 1SG-GEN struggle-TOP understand-NEG ALLOC.H-EPI-SFP
 ‘You will never understand my struggles.’
- b. **Anata**-ni-wa watasi-no kuroo-wa wakar-anai **des**-yoo-ne.
 2H-DAT-TOP 1SG-GEN trouble-TOP understand-NEG ALLOC.H-EPI-SFP
 ‘You will never understand my struggles.’

If the mismatch between *temee* and *-mas/des-* is truly incompatible at the level of literal meaning, we should only obtain a sarcastic reading for (51a), where the meaning of *-mas/des-* is inverted. Such meaning inversion should not be obligatory in (51b), which contains two matching honorific items. However, if the sarcastic reading in (45a) is due to other reasons (e.g., meaning of ‘genius’) and not due to the mismatch between *temee* and *-mas/des-*, (51a) should allow a literal interpretation. We obtain a literal reading for (51a). It is used felicitously in a quarrel between two people of a high social status (e.g., two officials in an office). Imagine a context where the speaker is an official who is upset with the addressee (who is also an official) because she blames him for the decrease in income despite her considerable efforts in the project. Due to being particularly upset with the addressee, the speaker uses *temee* to indicate hostility. However, since the speaker wants to appear decent in view of her high status, she also uses *des-* with its literal meaning. The same interpretation obtains for *des-* in (51b) where the pronoun is matching (i.e., honorific).

In summary, this section has shown that in structures with mismatching honorific items, sarcastic readings may seem prominent in the presence of evaluative predicates. However, literal readings are available too. In **Table 7**, we summarise the availability of literal readings with different combinations of 2P pronouns and allocutivity with different predicates.

Allocutivity	2P Pronoun	Predicate	Literal readings
Honorific	Non-honorific	Non-evaluative	Y
Honorific	Honorific	Non-evaluative	Y
Honorific	Non-honorific	Evaluative	Y
Honorific	Honorific	Evaluative	Y

Table 7: Literal readings across (mis)matching structures with different predicates.

The obvious question that arises is as follows: what allows the sincere co-occurrence of the honorific allocutive marker with a non-honorific 2P pronoun in the pragmatic component of Japanese?

4.3 Proposal

To explain the grammatical co-occurrence of *kisama* with *-mas/des-* within the same sentence, we propose that:

- (52) a. The meanings of 2P pronouns and honorific allocutivity are distinct in Japanese.
 b. The meanings of 2P pronouns and honorific allocutivity are incomparable in Japanese.

The first bullet in (52a) is what is already assumed in McCready (2019). (52b) constitutes the major revision that we propose. Given (52a) and (52b), meanings of 2P pronouns and allocutivity are not only distinct but also incomparable. This means that nothing should prevent non-honorific 2P pronouns and honorific allocutivity from coexisting within a single sentence. As long as we can find an accommodating context, we can felicitously use mismatching sentences, as in (46).

4.3.1 (Un)specified addressee

A natural question that needs to be answered is: how do *-mas* and *des-* differ in their expressive meaning vis-à-vis 2P pronouns? We will argue that unlike the 2P pronoun, *-mas/des-* encode the speaker's intent to be polite to an unspecified addressee.

A speech act usually consists of two speech act participants: a speaker and an addressee. We label an addressee who the speaker is talking to directly at utterance time t_u as a Specified Addressee (henceforth *Adr*). On the other hand, an addressee towards whom a certain message is targeted but who is not being spoken to directly is an Unspecified Addressee (henceforth *Adr**).

