DEFERENCE as DISTANCE: Metaphorical Base of Honorific Verb Construction in Japanese

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1. Introduction

Shibatani (1990: 379) says in The Languages of Japan, “the honorific system appears to be ultimately explainable in terms of the notion of (psychological) distance.” This study tries to elaborate, from the perspective of cognitive metaphors, the insight as expressed by Shibatani among many other grammarians (Brown and Gilman 1960, Tsujimura 1968, Brown and Levinson 1987, to list a few) into the relationship of deference and distance, and to argue, through an analysis of Japanese honorific verb constructions, that the metaphor, DEFERENCE IS DISTANCE, motivates and underlies the structure of the honorific system of language.

DISTANCE is essentially a spatial concept. In our basic understanding of space, there are two types of DISTANCE: HORIZONTAL DISTANCE and VERTICAL DISTANCE. It is widely observed that spatial and temporal cognition correlate with each other, and therefore, we understand TIME as if it were SPACE: i.e., TEMPORAL DISTANCE. These three types of DISTANCE are expressed in linguistic terms in the choice of lexical items such as verbs, nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, and in the grammatical tenses. What I am going to claim in this paper is that expressions of spatial and temporal distance are also utilized as honorifics to represent a psychological or a pragmatic space perceived between an interlocutor and a referent, or between interlocutors. In other words, DEFERENCE is metaphorically conceptualized as VERTICAL, HORIZONTAL, and TEMPORAL DISTANCE, as evidenced by metaphorical uses of linguistic expressions and grammatical constructions whose basic meanings involve spatial or temporal orientation. Languages differ as to what type of linguistic means they use to manifest DEFERENTIAL DISTANCE as well as what sort of DISTANCE they utilize, whether VERTICAL, HORIZONTAL, or TEMPORAL.

Now, I would like to concentrate on honorific verb constructions in Japanese, and to show in detail how they relate to the metaphorical motivation of DISTANCE. Though honorifics are manifested in verbs, nouns, pronouns, adjectives and adverbs in Japanese, verb honorification is syntactically the most complicated and the most productive. This is one of the reasons why this study concentrates on the analysis of verbs. Honorification by verbs is realized in two ways:
1) by regularly formed grammatical constructions with the use of certain auxiliary verbs; and 2) by lexical substitutes (suppletives) for neutral verbs. Regularly formed constructions apply to a fairly large number of verbs, while suppletives, substituting for the neutral verbs of daily use, form a closed class of about 50 verbs commonly used in modern Japanese. In what follows, I will show that in both types of honorific realizations, regularly formed ones and lexical substitutes, the Japanese honorific verb constructions relate to the VERTICAL and HORIZONTAL DISTANCING.

2. Vertical distance

2.1. Verticality of status assessment

In socio-cultural experience, we understand the status by means of orientational metaphors. For example, a person of HIGHER STATUS is perceived as being in a HIGHER POSITION, and a person of LOWER STATUS in a LOWER POSITION, as evidenced in a number of English conventionalized metaphorical expressions (as underlined) as in the following (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 16):

(1) He has a lofty position. She'll rise to the top. He's at the peak of his career. He's climbing the ladder. He has little upward mobility. He's at the bottom of the social hierarchy. She fell in status.

Thus, HIGH STATUS IS UP; LOW STATUS IS DOWN. The Japanese language shares this basic metaphorical concept, as shown in the direct translation of the above examples (Watanabe et al. trans. 1986: 23-24):

(2) Kare wa takai tii ni aru. Kanoyo wa saikooi made nobori-tumeru-da-roo. Syooogai de ima ga zetzyoo ki-da. Seiko e no hasigo o noboti-te-iru. Kare ni wa koozyooryoku ga hotondo nai. Kare wa syakai-kaisoo no teihen ni iru. Kanoyo wa chi o koroge-oti-ta.

It is assumed, therefore, that when the person addressed or referred to is socially superior to the speaker, this person is cognitively perceived to be at a HIGHER POSITION than the speaker. A higher position is conceived by (i) the speaker's raising the referent (or addressee) up, or (ii) by the speaker's ascribing his/her own position. Namely, RESPECT IS UP and HUMBLE IS DOWN. For example, in English we have: "His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales," in which "highness", a word of vertical orientation, is used in the formulation of honorific titles to represent a VERTICAL DISTANCE between the referent, Prince Charles, and the speaker.

2.2 Verbs of vertical orientation and motion

VERTICAL DISTANCE in Japanese is evidenced by the following historical changes, which resulted in the grammaticalization of auxiliaries, on the one hand, and in the polysemy of verbs of vertical orientation and motion, on the other:

Neutral Verbs Honorific Suppletives gram. const.

V of vertical orientation > V(HON) of donatory meaning > AUX (HON)
V of vertical motion

The first change occurred as a metaphorical transfer from verbs of vertical orientation and motion to an honorific usage of donatory verbs. The second change is a grammaticalization from the honorific verbs of donatory meaning to auxillary verbs of honorific marking.

The verbs of vertical orientation and motion which yielded honorific bearings are *ageru* ("to move something from a lower position to an upper position") [8e.1], *kudasu* ("to move something from an upper position to a lower position") [8c.1], *itadaku* ("to put or to have something on the top (head) of something") [12c.1], and their compounds. *Kudasu* underwent a syntactic change, where it was passivized, *kudas-are-ru*, and then the suffixes, -are and -ru, merged to make *kudasaru* [14c.1]. It is notable that *ageru* and *itadaku* are still used as full verbs of vertical motion and orientation in modern Japanese:

(3) Tom wa tana no to no* ni hon o age-ta.1
   Tom TOP shelf of on to book ACC raise-PAST
   'Tom put the book up on the shelf.' (Neutral)

(4) Fujisan wa itumo cyoozyoo ni yuki o itadai-te-iru.
   Mt.Fuji TOP always top at snow ACC have.on.the.top-GER-be
   'Mt. Fuji always has snow on the summit.' (Neutral)

2.3 Vertical motion to donation -- formation of honorific suppletives

Regarding the semantic change of these three vertical verbs, metaphorical transfer occurred, and they acquired a donatory meaning, based on the metaphor, GIVING IS MOVING THINGS FROM ONE PERSON TO ANOTHER, as schematized in Figure 1. At the same time, as the two persons involved in the GIVING/RECEIVING event are located in vertical positions, an honorific meaning emerged, based on the metaphor, RESPECT IS UP; HUMBLE IS DOWN.
2.4 Grammaticalization of verbs of vertical orientation and motion

The next step of change was grammaticalization, in which the honorific verbs of donatory meaning lost their full verb status, and became auxiliaries of honorific marking when they are suffixed to the main verb [18-19c.], as shown in the following examples:

(8) Watasai wa sensei o kaigi shitu ni annasai-te-sasage-ta.
    I TOP teacher ACC conference-room to lead-GER-HON(give.upward)-PAST
    'I ushered(HON) the teacher to a conference room.' (Deferential)

(9) Sensei ga wata shi ni suisen zyo o kai-te-kudasa-ta.
    teacher NOM me DAT reference.letter-ACC
    write-GER-HON(give.downward)-PAST
    'The teacher wrote(HON) me a reference letter.' (Deferential)

(10) Watasai wa sensei ni suisen zyo o kai-te-itada-i-ta.
     I TOP teacher DAT reference.letter ACC
     write-GER-HON(receive.from.above)-PAST
     'I received a favor from the teacher who wrote a reference letter for me.'
     'The teacher wrote(HON) me a reference letter.' (Deferential)

The donatory meaning remains in these honorific auxiliaries as indicated in the parentheses of the morpheme-by-morpheme translation in Examples 8, 9, and 10. Note that the particle, te, which connects the main verb and the grammaticalized auxiliary verb is a gerundive marker, which gives a nominal reading to the main verb. Hence, the EVENT described by the main verb is seen metaphorically as a THING, which is given or received with vertical motion between the speaker and the socially superior person, as indicated in Figure 2.

These grammaticalized auxiliaries can be used in combination, or in conjunction with the honorific suppletives of donatory meaning, such as:

(11) Sensei o tenzut-te-sasage-te-kudasai.
     teacher ACC help-GER-HON(give.upward)-GER-HON(give.downward)
     'Please help(HON) the teacher.' (Deferential)

(12) Kore o sensei ni sasage-te-kudasai.
     this ACC teacher DAT give(HON)-GER-HON(give.downward)
     'Please give(HON) this to the teacher.' (Deferential)
as auxiliaries, they function as an honorific marker. Figure 3 represents this flow of historical change in a vertical axis and the formulation of regularly formed honorific grammatical constructions in a horizontal axis:

Figure 2: Honorific auxiliaries of donatory meaning

Also, kudasaru and ageru are used as suffixes. They form compound verbs of honorific connotations such as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hon. suppletives with -kudasaru</th>
<th>Neutral verbs</th>
<th>English gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>go-ran-kudasaru</td>
<td>miru</td>
<td>HON-see-HON(give.downward)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moost-ageru</td>
<td>iu</td>
<td>say-HON(give.upward)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zonis-ageru</td>
<td>siru</td>
<td>know-HON(give.upward)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.5 Summary

To sum up briefly, VERTICAL DISTANCING is seen in the grammaticalization of several honorific auxiliaries, such as itadaku (‘to receive from above’), sasajgeru (‘to give upward’) and kudasaru (‘to give downward’). They have been grammaticalized by losing their original status as a full verb of vertical orientation and motion, or of subsequently acquired donatory meaning. In modern Japanese, these three verbs are polysemic as they still maintain their original meanings of vertical orientation and motion, and the honorific donatory meaning when they are used as honorific suppletives. In addition, when they are attached to the main verb...
3. Horizontal distance

3.1 Distance and the immediacy of event

HORIZONTAL DISTANCE between the referent (or the addressee) and the speaker is realized more abstractly in what the honorifics literature treats as a way of producing indirectness in speech acts. That is, DISTANCE IS INDIRECTNESS. Both the strategies of language use and the mechanisms of grammar contribute to creating this "indirectness." Indirectness is assessed notably by grammatical constructions relating to verbs, aspects, and modals, in which the immediacy of event upon the participant(s) (as identified with the speaker, the referent, or the addressee) is minimized. I would like to call this process of minimization of the immediacy of event on the participants "de-transitivization." De-transitivization is realized by:

1) decreasing the force or impact of the event upon the agent, e.g., by way of passive, stative, inchoative, spontaneous (middle passive), non-volitional or nominalized constructions or by using verbs of "low transitivity," (Hopper and Thompson 1980) as shown in Example 13. b, c, and d in contrast to 13.a, which is prototypically transitive:

(13) a. We regret that we cannot come to the party on Friday. (active)
   b. It is regretted that we cannot come to the party on Friday. (passive)
   c. It is regrettable that we cannot come to the party on Friday. (stative)
   d. It is our regret that we cannot come to the party on Friday. (nominal)

2) presenting an "irrealis" encoding of the event, that is, presenting an event as occurring in a non-real (contingent) world, e.g., by way of subjunctives, interrogatives, negatives, or in the past or the future tenses, as in Example 14.b in contrast to 14.a, which is presenting a "realis" encoding.13

(14) a. I am wondering if you can do me a little favor (present).
   b. I was wondering if you could do me a little favor (past, subjunctive).

3) ambiguating the participant(s) of the event, e.g., by mentioning the participant(s) in a non-prominent syntactic slot, blurring the identity of the participant(s) by the use of plural, inanimate, or indefinite forms, or referring to the participant(s) by the use of an oblique case as in Example 15.b in contrast to 15.a, in which the participant is animate:

(15) a. You shouldn't do things like that (animate).
   b. One shouldn't do things like that (inanimate, indefinite).

In Japanese verb honorification, HORIZONTAL DISTANCING is achieved by the first type of de-transitivization, i.e., by minimizing the impact of the event upon the agent through grammaticalization of verbs of horizontal movement, "de-transitive" verb constructions, and the combination of the two.

3.2 Verbs of horizontal movement

There are a few verbs of horizontal movement, which show a direct metaphorical mapping of horizontal distance from the physical domain to the honorific domain. They are the verbs, naru ("to become") and itaru ("to reach").

Example 16 below shows a neutral use of the verb, naru [10c.]. The particle, ni, which precedes the verb, naru, denotes the GOAL, so that the sentence implies that the agent came to the goal, which was "being a fine doctor." This basic metaphorical structure is retained in naru as an honorific marker.14 When it is used in an honorific construction, naru takes o-V ni naru [19c.] sequence, as shown in Example 17.

(16) Kare wa rippa na isya ni nat-ta.
    The TOP fine doctor GOAL become-PAST
    'He became a fine doctor.' (Neutral)

(17) Sensei ga hon o o-kaki ni nat-ta.
    teacher NOM book ACC HON-write GOAL HON(become)-PAST
    'The teacher wrote(HON) a book.' (Deferential)

The particle, ni, connecting kaku ("to write") and naru ("to become") in Example 17 gives a nominal reading to the preceding element, kaku, which is seen as a GOAL. Note also that the ending of the verb, kaku, takes a nominal ending, -i, in this construction (Suzuki 1989: 380). The use of honorific prefix o- before the verb, kaku, also contributes to giving a nominal connotation to the verb, kaku. It is due to the fact that the honorific prefixes, o- and go-, are basically attached to nouns and adjectives, both of which have nominal features, and that it is only when verbs have a nominal ending, -i, that they get the honorific prefixes, o- or go-.15 Thus, Example 17 reads as: "the teacher became (or came to) the state of writing a book" as if the agent, "the teacher," came along the PATH of "growth or change" to the GOAL, "the state of writing a book," as schematized in the following figure 4.

Hence, the GOAL marking of the particle, ni, and the nominal reading of the event described by the main verb, kaku, contribute to the HORIZONTAL DISTANCE between the agent and the event.

The other verb, itaru ("to reach")[8c.], also indicates that there was a motivation of DEERENCE IS HORIZONTAL DISTANCE in the development of the
honorific suppletive, *itasu* ('to do'),[14c.], and the honorific marker, *itasu* (HON)[18c.]. Examples 18, 19, and 20 explain this semantic change.

Agent = person socially superior to the speaker

*Sensei ga hon o o-kaki ni nat-ta* (Example 17).
'the teacher NOM book ACC HON-write GOAL HON(become)-PAST
'The teacher wrote(HON) a book.' (Deferential)

*Figure 4: Image-schema of o-V ni naru construction*

(18) *Kono mtti wa Santa Fe ni itaru mtti desu.*
'this road TOP Santa Fe GOAL reach road be(POL)
'This road is the one which leads to Santa Fe.' (Neutral)

(19) *Sensei, watasi ga sore o itasi-masu.*
'Teacher, I NOM it ACC do(HON)-POL
'Sir, I will do(HON) it.' (Deferential)

(20) *Watasi ga sensei o kaigisitu ni go-anmrai-itasi-masi-ta.*
'I NOM teacher ACC conference.room to HON-usher-HON(do)-POL-PAST
'I ushered(HON) the teacher to a conference room.' (Deferential)

*Itaru* ('to reach'), as a neutral verb, means that someone or something reaches a point (Example 18). *Itaru*, however, underwent a process of grammatical suffixation, and acquired a causative suffix, *-su*, to form a verb, *itasu*, which serves as an honorific suppletive for the neutral verb, *saru* ('to do'). *Itasu* ('to do(HON)') takes a person socially inferior as an agent, which is realized as the subject of the sentence (Example 19). The causative verb, *itasu*, serves to make the agent (the inferior person) humble him/herself to do something in favor of the superior person (the referent and/or the addressee of the sentence). The honorific suppletive, *itasu*, then underwent a grammaticalization by losing its full verb status, and acquired the function of an honorific marker as shown in Example 20. The honorific marker, *itasu*, is used with an honorific prefix *o/go*, which gives a nominal reading to the main verb. Note that *o/go-V itasu* has an image-schematic structure similar to *o-V ni naru* construction, as indicated in Figure 5:

Agent = person socially inferior to the referent (or the addressee)

*Watasi ga sensei o kaigisitu ni go-anmrai-itasi-masi-ta* (Example 20).
'I NOM teacher ACC conference.room to HON-usher-HON(do)-POL-PAST
'I ushered(HON) the teacher to a conference room.' (Deferential)

*Figure 5: Image-schema of o/go-V itasu*

The difference between Figures 4 and 5 is that *o-V ni naru* construction takes a superior person as an agent (subject honorifics or respect language), whereas *o/go-V itasu* takes an inferior person as an agent (object honorifics or humbling language). Nonetheless, in both cases, there is a metaphorical mapping of HORIZONTAL DISTANCE from a physical domain as expressed by the verbs of horizontal movement to a psychological domain as represented by honorific constructions. Hence, HORIZONTAL DISTANCE is perceived between the event and the agent. This means in turn that in the honorific constructions the event loses its impact upon the agent by being described remotely from the agent.

3.3 Detransitive verb constructions

Detransitivization, or "distanciation" of the event and the agent, occurs at a more abstract level than the grammaticalization of verbs of horizontal movement, in the "spontaneous" or "inchoative" constructions, which mark the levels of subject
honorific representation in modern Japanese. A neutral construction (Example 21) is less deferential than a “spontaneous” construction (Example 22); an “inchoative” construction (Example 17) or a combination of the two (Example 23) to express the same propositional meaning, “the teacher wrote a book.”

(21) Sensei ga hon o kai-ta (plain construction)
    teacher NOM book ACC write-PAST
    ‘The teacher wrote a book.’

(22) Sensei ga hon o kak-are-ta (spontaneous construction)
    teacher NOM book ACC write-HON(SPON)-PAST
    ‘The teacher wrote(HON) a book.’ (Deferential)

(17) Sensei ga hon o o-kaki ni nat-ta (inchoative construction)
    teacher NOM book ACC HON-write to HON(become)-PAST
    ‘The teacher wrote(HON) a book.’ (Deferential)

(23) Sensei ga hon o o-kaki ni nar-are-ta (combination)
    teacher NOM book ACC HON-write to HON(become)-HON(SPON)-PAST
    ‘The teacher wrote(HON) a book.’ (Deferential)

The Japanese auxiliary morpheme -(r)are, in Example 22 is an honorific use of the spontaneous construction. That is, -(r)are* acquired an honorific meaning[11c.] through a metaphorical extension from the spontaneous meaning. The spontaneous construction expresses “an event that automatically occurs or a state that spontaneously obtains without the intervention of an agent. Many languages are well known for expressing spontaneous events and states by the use of reflexive pronouns” (Shibatani 1985: 827) as in French ‘la porte s’est ouverte’ ([the door REFIL is opened] ‘The door opened’) or middle passives as in English ‘I got confused.’ In Example 22, it is described as if the book were automatically written with little intervention of the agent, i.e., the teacher. Hence, there is a lack of immediacy, a distance horizontally perceived between the event of “writing a book” and the agent, “the teacher,” and this distance seems to be mapped onto the distance between the speaker and the referent.

Example 17 is similar in that there is a horizontal distance between the event and the agent, but the formulation of this distance is by the inchoative construction, which describes the event as if someone came to the state which is described by the main verb. O- ni nar- construction, as explained in the previous section, retains a more direct link with the metaphorical motivation, DEERENCE IS HORIZONTAL DISTANCE, than the “spontaneous” construction, because the verb, nuru, is a motion verb of change or growth, which takes a particle denoting the GOAL, ni. Thus, this inchoative construction implies a metaphorical image-schema in which the agent is coming along the PATH to the GOAL (as represented by the event), and therefore, there is a remoteness perceived between the agent and the event (see Section 3.2 for details). Example 23 shows a combined honorific verb formulation, o- ni nar-aru, that is, a “spontaneous” (V-are-ru) construction of the “inchoative” (o- ni naru) construction. There is a group of verbs of low transitivity (Examples 24 to 26 below) which acquired an honorific meaning by a grammatical transformation of detransitivization (mainly by being suffixed with auxiliary verbs marking “spontaneous” construction) and a metaphorical extension. They are used as honorific suppletives (Examples 28 and 29), while their original un-suffixed verbs are used as neutral full verbs (Example 27).

(24) asobasu (‘to do[HON]’)[13c.] < asobasu (‘to play[HON]’)[10c.]
    < asobu (‘to play’) + su (aux(HON), obsolete)[8c.]

(25) nasaru (‘to do[HON]’)[18-19c.] < nasu (‘to perform, to form’) + are-ru
    (aux(SPON))[10c.]

(26) mieru (‘to come[HON]’)[10c.] < mieru (‘to come into sight’) [10c.]
    < mi (‘to see’) + yu (aux(SPON))[8c.]

The honorific suppletives asobasu and nasaru were grammaticalized and have acquired the function of honorific auxiliary verbs. Hence, when they are attached to the main verb, they formulate regularly formed honorific constructions (Example 30).

(27) Kodomo ga koen de ason-de-iru.
    Children NOM park in play-GER-bc.
    ‘The children are playing in the park.’ (Neutral)

(28) Syatyo no oku-sama wa uta o asobasu soo-da. [HON suppletive for ‘to
    play’]
    President of wife-HON TOP poems ACC play(HON) seem be
    ‘It seems that the wife of the president writes poems.’ (Deferential)

(29) Sensei ga go-happyoo o asobas-are-masi-ta. [HON suppletive for ‘to
    do’]
    teacher NOM HON-presentation ACC do(HON)-HON(SPON)-POL-PAST
    ‘The teacher gave a presentation.’ (Hyper deferential)
(30) Sensei ga oide-asobas-are-masi-ta. [grammaticalized HON aux] teacher NOM appear(HON)-HON(do)-HON(SPON)-POL-PAST 'The teacher came.' (Hyper Deferential)

3.4 Summary

HORIZONTAL DISTANCING is realized mainly in two ways: 1) by grammaticalization of verbs of horizontal movement; and 2) by detransitive construction. The process of grammaticalization of the verb, itaru ('to reach') > iitau ('to do(HON)'), is schematized in Figure 6, as an example:

| I | Verbs of horizontal movement |
|   | itaru 'to reach' |
|   | metaphorical transfer |
| II | Honorific suppletives |
|   | iitau + su > iitau 'to reach' + causative > 'to do(HON)' |
| III | Verbs: aannaisu 'to usher' |
|   | iitau 'HON(do)' |
|   | go-aannai-iitau 'HON-usher-HON(do)' |

Figure 6: DEERENCE IS HORIZONTAL DISTANCE (grammaticalization)

HORIZONTAL DISTANCING is, however, achieved most notably by detransitive construction realized by the honorific verb constructions, $V, (r)are-ru$ (spontaneous) and $o-V ni naru$ (inchoative). These two constructions are widely and frequently used, and syntactically very productive in modern Japanese. This is schematized in Figure 7.

I Kare wa rippana isya ni nat-ta (Example 16).
he TOP fine doctor GOAL become-PAST 'He became a fine doctor.' (Neutral)

II Sensei ga hon o a-kaki ni nat-ta (Example 17).
teacher NOM book ACC HON-write GOAL HON(become)-PAST 'The teacher wrote a book.' (Deferential)

Figure 7: DEERENCE IS HORIZONTAL DISTANCE (detransitive construction)
4. Temporal distance

TEMPORAL DISTANCING means that the use of past tense or future tense marks more deferential usage in some pragmatic situations. Temporal distance could be regarded as a special case of HORIZONTAL DISTANCE achieved by detransitivization of the second type, namely, by presenting an "irrealis" encoding of the event, that is, presenting an event as occurring in a non-real world (cf. Section 3.1). As mentioned earlier, the TIME/SPACE cognition correlates, and thus renders TEMPORAL DISTANCE as a way to achieve DEERENCE. This is a dominant strategy of distancing in polite formulae expressions in English (Brown and Levinson 1987; Fleischman 1989), although it rarely occurs in Japanese. Temporal distancing for honorific usage by past tense occurs in certain dialects in Hokkaido, Tohoku, Shikoku, and Kyushu (Umegaki 1974: 185-186) as in Examples 31 and 32:

(31) Tōtō, e-da-ka-ne?
   Father, be-PAST-Q-TAG
   'Your father was(HON) here, wasn’t he?'

(32) I-da, i-da
   Be-PAST, be-PAST.
   'He was(HON) here. He was here.'

5. Conclusion

5.1 Summary

It has been claimed by the analysis of some prototypical samples that the same basic metaphorical motivation underlies the diachronic process of the grammaticalization in certain honorific auxiliaries, of semantic change in honorific suppletives, as well as the synchronous structure of honorific verb constructions in modern Japanese. Table 1 is a list of honorific suppletives and regularly formed honorific constructions. Although this is not an exhaustive list, the verb constructions listed cover most of those commonly used in modern Japanese. Examples in bold face show those which could be explained by the metaphor DEERENCE IS DISTANCE, as discussed in this paper.

Table 1: Non-exhaustive list of verb honorifics in modern Japanese

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb Constructions</th>
<th>Honorary Subject</th>
<th>Honorary Object</th>
<th>Honorary Addresser</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regularly formed</td>
<td>(o/go)-V kudasaru</td>
<td>(o/go)-V itadaku</td>
<td>V(-te) ageru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(VERTICAL</td>
<td>V(-te) kudasaru</td>
<td>V(-te) itadaku</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>DISTANCE)</td>
<td>V ageru</td>
<td>V ageru</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(o/go)-V sasi-ageru</td>
<td>V(-te) sasi-ageru</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(o/go)-V moosi-ageru</td>
<td>(o/go)-V moosi-ageru</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suppletives</td>
<td>agaru (eat, drink)</td>
<td>sasi-ageru (give)</td>
<td>sasi-ageru (give)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(VERTICAL</td>
<td>mei-ageru (eat)</td>
<td>zonzi-ageru (know)</td>
<td>itadak-u (receive,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISTANCE)</td>
<td>kudasaru (give)</td>
<td>moosi-ageru (say)</td>
<td>eat, drink)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>go-ran-kudasaru (see)</td>
<td>negai-ageru (wish)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>agaru (visit)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>itadaku (receive, eat, drink)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>tyo-dai-suru (receive, eat)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>tamawaru (receive)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>mairu (go)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>sanzo-yoos-suru (visit)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>haitexyakusaru (see, look)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>haitexyakusaru (borrow)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>haitexyakusuru (guess)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regularly formed</td>
<td>(o/go)-V-(r)are-ru</td>
<td>o/go-V itasu</td>
<td>o/go-V de arimasu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(HORIZONTAL</td>
<td>o/go-V ni naru</td>
<td></td>
<td>o/go-V de gozaimasu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISTANCE)</td>
<td>o/go-V nasara</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o/go-V asobasu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suppletives</td>
<td>asobasu (do)</td>
<td>ukagau (visit, ask)</td>
<td>nakunaru (die)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(HORIZONTAL</td>
<td>mieru (come)</td>
<td>itasu (do)</td>
<td>yasu (go to bed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISTANCE)</td>
<td>nasaru (do)</td>
<td>o-me ni kakaru (meet)</td>
<td>motomeru (buy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>o-me ni kakaru (show)</td>
<td>itasu (do)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regularly formed</td>
<td>(o/go)-V suru</td>
<td>o/go-V suru</td>
<td>o/go-V masu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(o/go)-V suru</td>
<td>o/go-V masu</td>
<td>o/go-V desu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2 Further problems

Examples in plain style in Table 1, particularly those with regularly formed constructions will constitute an important part of the further study. The use of o- or go- prefixes attached to the verbs in o/go-V suru, o/go-V masu, o/go-desu, obviously shares common features with those honorific verb constructions explained by the metaphors above; however, the auxiliary verbs, -suru, -desu, and -masu seem to have a weaker bearing in regard to DISTANCE metaphors except for the following two facts: (i) that o/go- prefixes suggest a nominal reading of the event described by the main verbs as explained earlier (see Section 3) and (ii) that the honorific formulation of sandwiching the main verb with a prefix and an auxiliary verb, contributes to “lengthening” the verbal phrase. “Lengthening” indeed is a factor to increase DISTANCE in the physical shape of linguistic expressions; nevertheless, this notion of “lengthening” seems to relate more to the semantic level of physical manifestations than to the semantic-syntactic constructions discussed above.

In this regard, we might like to add to the issues for further research this semantic level of iconicity: LENGTH IS DISTANCE. What has been discussed in the body of this paper concerns the metaphorical mapping of the syntactic and lexical domains onto the conceptual domain in honorifics. In a word, this metaphorical mapping has been treated on the semantic-syntactic-cognitive plane. If we looked at the same phenomena from a semantic perspective, namely, the relationship of the form of linguistic units such as words and sentences with the meaning expressed, we could say that all the forms of honorific usage discussed above have physically longer sequences than their non-honorific counterparts. This is a clear case of iconic manifestation in which MORE SPACE MEANS DISTANCE. In this way, the metaphor, DEERENCE IS DISTANCE also holds at the level of “diagrammatic icon” on the semantic plane (cf. Hiraga 1994).

Another very important issue is to test the validity and the universality of this metaphor of DISTANCE. It seems that many of the politeness phenomena discussed by Brown and Levinson (1987) in terms of “negative politeness” in pragmatics could be explained by the metaphor of DISTANCE elaborated in this paper. The metaphor also seems promising as an explanation for the honorific motivation not only of verb constructions, but also other grammatical constructions such as nouns, pronouns, locatives (datives), etc. Probably languages would differ in regard to which of the three DISTANCES they employ to manifest honorification, but, I would think that many languages of the world would express honorification or deference by creating a DISTANCE between the interlocutors. I hope my “humble” attempt to explicate the metaphorical base of honorific verb constructions in modern Japanese may arouse interest in this fascinating area of honorifics research in world languages.

Notes

1. “A person socially superior to a speaker” (Harada 1976: 503) here designates a prototypical person in an idealized cognitive model. In actuality, the defining qualities of “socially superior person” to a speaker may vary from culture to culture. For example in Japanese culture, not only social status but also seniority, gender, in-group/out-group orientation, and the formality of the situation are the important factors in coming to a decision as to who belongs to the “socially superior” category. Although these sociolinguistic factors are an important issue in honorifics research, they are not my immediate concern here, as the focus of this study is on the conceptual metaphors which motivate the grammatical construction of honorific system (see 1982 for sociolinguistics of the Japanese honorific system).

2. Note that passivization is another way of representing a distance metaphorically. See Section 3 for details.

3. Kudatsu with its literal meaning as a verb of vertical motion is no longer used.

Somayama ni tan kumari koso samidare o kudatsu kumo to nari-keri (12c).

Somayama at grow smoke just heavy shower ACC lower down cloud DAT become-it.is.said

It is said that the smoke which grew at Somoyama just became the cloud which poured down the heavy-shower.

5. Verbs in question are boldfaced in the examples.

6. Abbreviations for function words are: ACC(asative); DAT(ive); GER(undive); GOAL; HON(orific); NEGative; NOM(native); PASS(ive); PAST; POL(Ge); Q(uestion); REFL(exive); SPCN(tense); TOP(i). When a string of words in English corresponds to one word in Japanese, dots are used instead of spaces to show word boundaries.

7. “Respect language” is employed when the subject of the sentence refers to a person socially superior to the speaker (subject honorifics), whereas “humble language” is employed when the object of the sentence refers to a person socially superior to the speaker (object honorifics). See footnote 22 for details.

8. Agura used to have both donatory and honorific senses; but, it gradually lost its honorific meaning. Then, it underwent a syntactic change by acquiring a prefix sas-, whose function is emphatic of the verbal meaning in both donatory and honorific senses. Therefore, in modern Japanese saagura is a donatory verb with an honorific meaning, whereas agura is a donatory verb without an honorific meaning.


10. Among the three neutral donatory verbs, agura, kusuru, morar, agura only means a vertical motion as explained before. These neutral donatory verbs were also grammaticalized and are now used as auxiliaries, although they do not connote an honorific meaning.

11. For details on giving and receiving verbs, see Kuno (1973: 127-135).

12. Cognitive grammatical concepts such as “transitivity” by Hopper and Thompson (1980: 252-3) and “agent defocusing” by Shibatani (1985: 54-55) partly relate to the workings of “detransitivization” in grammatical constructions of honorifics. See also Croft (1990).

13. TEMPORAL DISTANCING is thus a case of HORIZONTAL DISTANCING.

14. I owe this insight to Naoyuki Fukushima (personal communication).

15. The honorific prefix, o-, is used with verbs of Japanese origin: go- with those of Chinese origin. For example, o-ukayu o-kao (“HON-beautiful HON-face”), go-ippum go-kenshin (“HON-fine HON-research”). Note that o-V (infinitive) is ungrammatical but o-V (nominal) is
grammatical, as in "o-tanoshimu (‘HON-enjoy’) vs. o-tanoshimi (‘HON-enjoy’ > ‘enjoyment’). See Suzuki (1989: 381) for details.

16. The suffix -masu attached at the end of the sentence is an auxiliary verb of honorific marking. In the morpheme-by-morpheme translation, it is marked as POL(tie) because it is an addressee honorifics (politeness language), which is different from the referent honorifics presented in the former examples as HON. When the addressee and the referent of the sentence are identical and represent someone socially superior to the speaker, the polite and honorific forms are commonly used in combination.

17. Subject honorific involves the case where the subject of the sentence refers to a person socially superior to the speaker. For details, see footnote 22.

18. The Japanese morpheme, -prise, is used in four types of constructions -- passive, potential, honorific, and spontaneous (for further details, see Shibatani 1985).

19. Because -prise has four uses, it sometimes causes ambiguity. Hence, the honorific use of -prise becomes less favored than o-V ni nareru construction.

20. Although prescriptive grammarians traditionally object to this type of "double honorifics" (combined use of subject honorifics) as an incorrect usage of honorification, the o-V ni nareru construction is very commonly used in present day Japanese (Niyezawa 1991: 48). Declaratively speaking, it is speculated that o-V ni nareru shows one of the tendencies of change in honorific verb constructions, namely, to create more "distance" by combining deontic constructions.

21. The honorific use of past tense seems to occur in those areas notably in the initial phase of telephone conversations (I owe this observation to Harmut Haberlandt (personal communication)) as in the following:

Kotora Masako des-ita-go...
Here Masako be-PAST-but...
‘This was (HON) Masako; but...’

22. Honorification is traditionally divided into three types: 1) zonkai-go (‘respect language’), which is controlled by the speaker-referent axis (referent honorifics), particularly when the subject (NOMINATIVE) of the sentence refers to a person socially superior to a speaker (subject honorifics); 2) kensyu-go (‘humble language’), which is controlled by the speaker-referent axis (referent honorifics), particularly when the object (ACCUSATIVE or DATIVE) of the sentence refers to a person socially superior to a speaker (object honorifics); and 3) teinei-go (‘polite language’), which is controlled by the speaker-addressee axis (addressee honorifics) (cf. Yamanashi 1974: 760; Harada 1976: 302; Ide 1982: 360-363, Shibatani 1990: 375). When the referent and the addressee are the same person, both referent honorifics and addressee honorifics are employed at the same time. It is possible to add one more category to the systems of honorifics-setting honorifics which is controlled by the speaker-addressee axis. The Japanese honorific marker, -masu, for example, is said to be in a transitional phase from addressee honorifics to setting honorifics, as it is acquiring a function of marking a formal setting rather than serving to mark the speaker-addressee relation.

23. In passing, the causative also played a role as a source of honorific verb constructions such as masu, irassya-ru, V-se rare-ru, V-se tamau [obsolete], V-se mou-a [obsolete], etc. As the causatives present a cognitive concept opposite to deonticization, the causative honorific construction constitutes a counterexample to the present analysis. Traditional grammarians explained that the causative construction functions to avoid the direct mention of the event, and therefore, to contribute to deontic/voluntary but they did not offer any reasons why causation can work that way. The fact that the causatives are always used in conjunction with other honorific constructions such as passives (e.g., irassya-ru, V-se rare-ru), or grammaticalized honorific auxiliaries (e.g., V-se tamau [obsolete], V-se mou-a [obsolete]) would suggest that causatives emphasize the honorific implications produced by adjacent grammatical constructions rather than being semantically or cognitively prominent themselves in the grammatical constructions of honorification.

24. Formulation of personal pronouns and the terms of address in Japanese would present a rich resource for the metaphorical motivation of VERTICAL and HORIZONTAL DISTANCE. For example, the second singular person is represented more differentially as anata (‘far’) than o-nai (‘HON-front’), a clear case of DECREASE IS HORIZONTAL DISTANCE.

References


Spatial Conceptualization of Time in Chinese

Ning Yu
University of Arizona

1. Introduction

It has been claimed that notions of time are expressed in terms of space in various languages; and that this kind of metaphorical expression actually reflects the general process of human cognition where time is conceptualized in terms of space via cross-domain mappings. It seems, however, that the universal status of the time-as-space metaphor has not received adequate support in the form of systematically worked-out evidence across languages. To contribute to the establishment of its universal status, this paper presents the system of time-as-space metaphor in Chinese.

Lakoff (1990, 1993) has noted that in English the general conceptual metaphor of time is: Time Passing Is Motion. Specifically, time is understood in terms of things (i.e. entities and locations) and motion. The present time is at the same location as a canonical observer, with future times being in front of the observer and past times behind the observer. Either time or the observer is moving while the other is stationary. Therefore, Lakoff specified two special cases in English as in (1) and (2):

(1) Case 1: Time passing is motion of an object.
   a. Thanksgiving is coming up on us.
   b. Time is flying by.
   c. The time has passed when ...

(2) Case 2: Time passing is motion over a landscape.
   a. We’re coming up on Christmas.
   b. We’re getting close to Christmas.
   c. He passed the time happily.

This paper analyzes data to demonstrate that the expressions of time in Chinese, which form a very rich and intricate system, largely fall into the patterns outlined by Lakoff for English.
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