

## **English as a public-self-centered language and Japanese as a private-self-centered language**

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This paper discusses the three-tier model of language use, proposed in Hirose (2013, 2015), as a theory that provides an explanatory basis for grammatico-pragmatic phenomena in English and Japanese. The model is built on the concepts of public and private self as two aspects of the speaker, which have been developed in a series of previous studies (Hirose 1995, 2000, 2002, 2014; Hasegawa and Hirose 2005). The main hypotheses of the three-tier model are as follows.

- (i) The speaker, who construes a situation and encodes it linguistically, can be deconstructed into the *public self* as the subject of communicating and the *private self* as the subject of thinking or consciousness. English is a public-self-centered language, whereas Japanese is a private-self-centered language.
- (ii) Language use consists of three tiers: one is the *situation construal* tier, in which the speaker as private self construes a situation, forming a thought about it; another is the *situation report* tier, in which the speaker as public self reports or communicates his/her construed situation to the addressee; and the third is the *interpersonal relationship* tier, in which the speaker as public self construes and considers his/her interpersonal relationship with the addressee. Languages differ as to how the three tiers are combined, according to whether their basic egocentricity lies in the public self or the private self.
- (iii) In English, a public-self-centered language, the situation construal tier is normally unified with the situation report tier, to which is added the interpersonal relationship tier. The unification of situation construal and situation report means that one gives priority to the outside perspective from which to report a situation and linguistically encodes as much as is necessary to report about the situation. On the other hand, the fact that situation report is not unified with interpersonal relationship means that one can assume an unmarked level of communication which does not depend on any particular relationship between speaker and addressee, a level where the speaker and the addressee are assumed to be linguistically equal, being in a symmetrical relationship.
- (iv) In Japanese, a private-self-centered language, the situation construal tier is normally independent of the situation report tier and the interpersonal relationship tier. Thus, in construing a situation, the speaker can freely place him/herself in the situation and view it from the inside; also, he/she does not need to linguistically encode what is already given in his/her consciousness. On the other hand, situation report is unified with interpersonal relationship, which means that in reporting a situation to someone, the speaker must

always consider his/her interpersonal relationship with the addressee, defining him/herself and the addressee in terms of that relationship. Thus, in situation report, interpersonal relationship is linguistically encoded as much as possible, and there is no unmarked level of communication neutral to interpersonal relationship.

Focusing in particular on the hypothesis of English as a public-self-centered language and Japanese as a private-self-centered language, the paper shows that the three-tier model gives a principled account of grammatico-pragmatic differences between English and Japanese.

## References

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