English and Japanese constructions without hearer-orientation

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The three-tier model of language use (Hirose 2013, 2015) posits that language use is made up of three components: situation construal, situation report, and interpersonal relationship. At the center of this model lies Hirose’s (1995) pragmatic distinction in terms of private and public expression. Private expression, corresponding to the non-communicative, thought-expressing function of language, lacks a communicative intention on the part of the speaker and is defined without any reference to the hearer. Public expression, serving the communicative function of language, incorporates the speaker’s communicative intention and is always hearer-oriented. In terms of the three-tier model of language use, private expression consists solely of the situation construal tier to the exclusion of the situation report (and interpersonal relationship) tier(s), while public expression crucially contains the situation report (and interpersonal relationship) tier(s) as well as the situation construal tier.

This paper focuses on private expression and offers three case studies to show that English and Japanese both have constructions without hearer-orientation, constructions composed only of the situation construal tier and specialized to function as private expressions. The phenomena dealt with are: the English diary subject omission construction (Haegeman 2013; Hirose 2013); the Mad Magazine construction (Akmajian 1984; Lambrecht 1990); and the Japanese adjectival conjugational ending drop construction (Konno 2012). I will argue that the notion of private expression is indispensable to a full description of their pragmatic nature (Konno 2015; cf. also Hasegawa 2010).

The present paper also discusses what implications English and Japanese constructions without hearer-orientation have for the three-tier model of language use, where languages are different with respect to how the three tiers are combined by default. In English the situation construal and situation report tiers are normally associated to the exclusion of the interpersonal relationship tier, while in Japanese the situation construal tier is normally dissociated from the situation report and interpersonal relationship tiers, which are combined. This difference in tier association leads to the following distinct default preferences: the unmarked mode of expression is public expression in English and private expression in Japanese (Hirose 2013, 2015). This typological hypothesis predicts that constructions without hearer-orientation occupy different pragmatic niches in the grammars of English and Japanese (Konno 2015). I will argue that this is in fact the case.

References


