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# Language and the Culture of Gender: At the Intersection of Structure, Usage, and Ideology

MICHAEL SILVERSTEIN

## EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

Central to the concerns of modern semiotic research is the integration of a theory of ideology with an account of actual social practice. This integration has proved difficult for any approach which does not realize the importance of systematic pragmatic or indexical relations which link contextual parameters of communicative events with rule-governed aspects of semiotic codes. Similarly, this integration cannot be achieved without an appreciation for the inherent skewing or distorting of any reflexive understanding due to the inherent limitations on awareness of semiotic processes.

In this chapter Silverstein argues that the study of gender systems in language and culture involves analyzing the relationship among three interlocking yet seemingly independent realms. First, gender is a formal categorization of noun phrases which, together with other noun categories such as "animate" and "agentive" form a hierarchy of inclusiveness of denotation and enable language to be a means for reference and predication. Distinctions

can be made within this realm of linguistic structure between those languages that signal gender by formal marks attached to the noun phrases being categorized and those languages, like English, that mark gender in other places, such as with anaphoric pronouns. Second, gender is a pragmatic or indexical category implemented in ongoing speech; here, it is also related to signaling, for example, social status, deference, power, or intimacy pertaining to the participants in the speech situation. Third, gender is an institutionalized ideology in terms of which rationalization of linguistic structure and usage is constrained by limitations on metalingual awareness.

Gender ideology and both denotational and pragmatic gender usage, Silverstein shows, modify each other in complex ways. Ideological encompassment of gender in language tends to misread the subtle nonisomorphic relationship between denotational values and contextual regularities by interpreting the latter in terms of the former. Thus, contemporary feminist criticism of English language usage frequently and predictably locates the origin of indexical asymmetry, as manifest in actual linguistic usage and evaluation, in the asymmetries of gender categorization of noun phrases. For example, much attention has been focused on *he/she* anaphors as instances of referential categories. Furthermore, linguistic ideology and linguistic practice are interrelated in that use of language by persons committed to a certain ideological position regarding language automatically confers upon certain linguistic forms (both used and avoided) a particular indexical value or meaning associable by the society at large with the political position of these speakers.

Silverstein's conclusion is that only a comprehensive analysis of the intersection of linguistic structure, actual usage, and reflective ideology can free political criticism from the tendency to project referential rationalizations on essentially pragmatic phenomena. That linguistic structure, even in response to prescriptive change, continues to be asymmetrical in its formal categorization of noun phrases should not, then, cause a deflection of attention away from the social-indexical patterns of linguistic usage, which are the true means of codifying power asymmetries in society.

## INTRODUCTION

The contemporary sociolinguistic dilemma of English pronoun usage—to “he” or not to “he”—illustrates a larger theoretical point about language as a semiotic system. It also suggests a practical lesson about how language is mobilized in political struggles. First, the theoretical point. The total linguistic fact, the datum for a science of language, is irreducibly dialectic in nature. It is an unstable mutual interaction of meaningful sign forms contextualized to situations of interested human use, mediated by the fact of cultural ideology. And the linguistic fact is irreducibly dialectic, whether we view it as so-called synchronic usage or as so-called diachronic change. It is an indifferently synchronic–diachronic totality, which, however, at least initially—in keeping with traditional autonomous divisions of scholarly perspective—can be considered from the points of view of language structure, contextualized usage, and ideologies of language.

From this, second, the suggested lesson. Attempts at the regimentation of language, the explicit formulation of standards bespeaking adherence to various larger social and political values, are part of such dialectical social processes played out over time. One component of the process is an ideological formation rationalizing some particular linguistic value; but it is the larger dialectic process that ultimately regiments language as an institution. Explicit views on acceptable language exert only one, generally indirect force on the process.

It is interesting that, concluding a 1979 survey of the social marker of gender in speech, Smith could write that "it seems unlikely that speech would ever become the focal point of popular concern over relations between the sexes, as it has for some ethnic and nationalist movements" (1979:138). Even given reasonable publication lag times, it is difficult to understand such a statement in light of a decade-long multimedia public discourse in virtually every area of quotidian or contemplative life. For English and other European standard languages, proposals about language reform abound, based on particular views and/or analyses of the constituted problem of language and gender. Governments and other official institutions meanwhile redo printed and spoken titles and status names, personal naming regulations, et cetera. Learned journals and textbook publishers as much as popular periodicals have explicitly reformulated stylistic guidelines about pronominal usage in attempts to please everyone, or at least offend no one. Such phenomena certainly demonstrate that language is indeed a "focal point" of a social concern, the vehicle of an unfolding process that it behooves us to try to understand with as much dispassionate analytic rigor as we can.

To begin consideration of the matter, three perspectives can be identified that have generally been treated as distinct and independent, what we might call the structural, the pragmatic, and the ideological. I want to develop the argument that these analytically distinct realms seem to interact in the linguistic (and even sociolinguistic) fact of 'gender'. And more generally, this is a claim-by-example for every linguistic category related to our ability to refer and predicate, which, carefully examined, is situated at such a triple intersection. So let me briefly characterize these perspectives, at least as they traditionally present themselves, and then go on to examine 'gender' that way. In conclusion, I can return to the argument about the merely perspectival analytic distinctness of these realms, and make some proposals about what ought to replace them.

The *structural* realm defines a norm of categories of linguistic form as these interact in a system or grammar. This grammatical norm, Saussure's *langue*, is said to underlie, or to be implicit in, the actual usage of language as a behavioral vehicle of communication, Saussure's *parole*. Hence, categories of grammar in this sense are abstract, though they are traditionally abstracted from usage under assumptions about communication. Specifically, traditional views

of linguistic structure assume that communication is propositional in value, that is, is organized so as to refer to things (pick out objects of reference or topics of discourse) and, in different gradient degrees and modalizations, to characterize or describe or predicate truths about them. If we take the most “concrete” of English grammatical categories, such as ‘singular’ vs. ‘plural’ *number*, this seems to be the set of formal regularities related to picking out or characterizing objects as one or many. If we take the most “abstract” of English grammatical categories, such as ‘subjective’ vs. ‘objective’ *case* (formally indicated mostly with order of certain words), even this seems to be the set of formal regularities ultimately related to certain directionalities of predicable relationships between objects (*Who* buys from/sells to *whom*, etc.). Virtually all of what both users and professional analysts (grammarians) of language call the structure of a language is abstracted from such assumptions about the propositional or representational value of linguistic communication.

There is a second perspective on language, here called *pragmatics*. This studies usage as discourse in actual situations of communication, looking for regularities of how “appropriate” linguistic forms occur as indexes of (pointers to) the particularities of an intersubjective communicative context and how “effective” linguistic forms occur as indexes of (pointers to) intersubjective consequences of communication. Such study of language as discourse, rather than as abstract propositional structure, includes principles of cohesion—and its specialization in poetic form—of discourse units when we consider previously instanced language forms as part of the shared ongoing context of communication. It includes so-called *illocutionary* and *perlocutionary* “speech acts”—“doing things with words” such as promising, insulting, warding off evil, et cetera, appropriately and effectively carried out when we use language forms. And very importantly, pragmatics includes the notion of how systematic variations in “saying the same thing” in discourse constitute *social identity markers* of participants in the communicative act. Several approaches to pragmatics are differentiated by whether or not they concern themselves with the problem of goal directedness or purposivity (or even individual intentions) in using language, as related to and implicated in the mere fact of happenstance or systematic indexical value of a particular language form. These two areas of concern are both sometimes called the “function(s)” of actual language use, so we should carefully distinguish *purposive function(s)* in the one sense from *indexical function(s)* in the other, as we do below.

But this suggests, then, a third perspective on language, particularly as we consider the distinctness of purposivity in language use from indexical value or meaningfulness. That the very users explicitly formulate language use as a means to an end in interaction indicates that their understanding of pragmatics (as of structure) can be at least implicitly reconstructed as rationalization in the paradigm of interested human social action. That is, conscious purposivity

in language use entails a consideration of the ideologies about language form, meaning, function, value, et cetera that the users apparently bring to bear on the activity of using it. Such an *ideological* realm is thus a more institutionalized expression of the tendency to metalevel apprehension of language as behavior and structure. Any statements about language are indeed metalinguistic statements, since they take language as the very topic of discourse; ideological analysis studies to what extent such statements are rationalized, perhaps systematically, in culturally understandable terms as the socially emergent reflectivity of actors themselves. How are doctrines of “correctness” and “incorrectness” in language usage rationalized? How are they related to doctrines of inherent representational power, beauty, expressiveness, et cetera of language as a valued mode of action? Such questions can be studied from the point of view of ideological and cultural analysis.

It would appear that the phenomenon of gender in language can be approached initially from any of these points of view. Certainly, particular languages are said to have a *gender system* as an aspect of the norms of propositional linguistic structure. Certainly, particular language usages are said to belong to the realms of *men’s vs. women’s speech*, appropriate variations in saying otherwise “the same thing” indexing gender identities in the speech situation. Certainly, language users have views on how men and women should and/or do speak, how language structure and/or usage inherently and/or actually plays a role in defining what they perceive to be the social reality of gender identity. Just how bound up with each other all these facts are, however, has generally escaped notice in both popular and technical accounts. This I explore, using contemporary Modern English as the major exemplification.

The argument here is that for contemporary Modern English, the structural category of gender fits into an expected and universal typology of categories of noun phrases. It is one from among the set of different but consistent ways that certain semantic configurations are expressible in language form. The pragmatic expression of gender in English linguistic usage emerges from a quite widespread phenomenon, the pragmatics of social power asymmetries and similar hierarchical aspects of constituted social structure. In English, the pragmatic expression of gender has been only marginally related to the structural category. And the ideology of gender, including language, is now constituted in English as part of a political struggle. Views on various sides of the issues nevertheless show characteristic reflections of metalinguistic awareness of the users, as would be predicted: pragmatic characteristics are apprehended and analyzed in terms of an expectable misanalysis of the principles of structural gender categories. Native speaker metalinguistics assimilates pragmatic effects to an expected model of representational structure of the language, and seeks to rationalize usage (and structure) in terms of this, in a constant dialectic the reality of which emerges ultimately to analytic view in historical change.

## GENDER AS A CATEGORY OF REFERENCE AND PREDICATION

Let us begin with differentiating gender as a noun phrase category in the structural sense from the notion of gender in discourse usage. We can illustrate the independence of these two values of particular forms of language by ordering examples in a two by two array, as shown in Table 1. If linguistic structure comprehends the formal regularities abstractable from how one refers to and predicates about the gender of things with language (as ordered from left to right), and linguistic usage comprehends the formal regularities of how we index (point to) the social realities of gender in the speech situation (as ordered from top to bottom), for any example of a linguistic form, we can illustrate the presence (+) and absence (–) of these meanings by its placement in the correct cell.

The traditional grammatical category of gender, or gender classes of noun phrases, for example, is a formal distinction from the analytic perspective of reference and predication. Note that in many (perhaps all) languages, certain nouns, regardless of any grammatical category membership, refer to gendered entities; certain verbs also predicate states and activities of gendered entities, with a kind of implicit, semantic categorization represented. In many languages, for example, Hebrew, even the forms that refer to/predicate about the individuals in the roles of speaker and hearer at the time the speech is ongoing, that is, the so-called first person and second person pronouns and so-called first-person and second-person verb forms, also formally distinguish gender of speaker, gender of hearer. All these examples, presenting gender of objects of reference-and-predication, are in the left column.

TABLE 1  
Categorical Codings of Gender Distinctions in Language

Gender forms in discourse	Gender forms in reference and predication	
	+	–
+	First and Second Person pronouns and/or verb forms, e.g., Thai, Hebrew, Russian	"Men's and Women's speech," e.g., Koasati, Yana, Chukchee
–	"Gender" classes of regular noun phrases, e.g., English, French, Chinook, Djirbal Gender reference of certain nouns/gender predication of certain verbs (most languages—all?)	All other features of languages

The rows of Table 1, by contrast, plot the presence or absence of a formal system of discourse indexicals of the gender of at least one of the participants in the linguistic interaction, (independent of any propositional message ongoing about some object(s) of reference and predication). So-called men's-and-women's speech in many languages is a phenomenon of this sort, whether the formal indication of gender of participants is a difference of phonology, morphology, et cetera. Observe that the indication of participant gender by distinct pronouns and/or inflections of the first and second persons, placed in the left upper cell in Table 1, participates in both systems simultaneously; such reference and predication is inherently deictic, or dependent upon discourse indexicality, in terms of which only can we define the roles of speaker, hearer, et cetera.

Thus, a gender system in the purely referential sense—a phenomenon placed in the left lower cell of Table 1—is just a formal categorization of nouns or noun phrases like any other such formal categorization, associated with certain semantic characteristics. What is called the gender system of English is a categorization of every basic singular noun stem in the language by what replaceive anaphoric pronoun it selects in the syntactic system of reference maintenance. Thus, note that *man* goes together with *he*; *woman* goes together with *she*; *car* goes together with *it* (and of course *men*, *women*, or *cars*, the plurals, all go together with *they*). In English, unlike in many languages, there is nothing about the form of the noun itself that puts it into one or another of the gender categories, no local formal indication like a prefix or a suffix that always must accompany the stem in a full word to indicate gender class of the noun, though some few derivational suffixes do, in fact, have feminine gender regularly determined (-*ess*, for example).

In distinguishing the English system from among all possible systems of noun categorization, we should observe, as shown in Table 2, that there are really three levels of relevant phenomena. In the right column are shown FORMAL or grammatical labels for various commonly encountered noun categorizations in referential linguistic structure. These have the property of being more and more inclusive, the higher classes being formal specializations of the ones below. For example, any form in the PERSONAL category is in the ANIMATE category, but not vice versa; any form that is ANIMATE is also AGENTIVE, but not vice versa. In general, there are such relationships of implication of membership among the sets of nominal forms, when we view them in terms of specialization of their systematic formal attributes, their grammatical properties as linguistic elements. (The situation is sometimes more complex in particular languages, in that at some given level in this universal schema of possibilities there will be cross-cutting categorizations that jointly make up the equivalent of a formal class, but we will oversimplify for expository purposes.)

Now each of the FORMAL categories has what we can call a *notional core*,

TABLE 2  
 Gender Systems in Reference Are Classificatory Distinctions that Form Part of Formal,  
 Notional, and Referential Classes of Nouns

Differential reference to	Notional	Formal
Woman	Female	FEMININE
Man	Male	MASCULINE
Social status/role	Human	PERSONAL
Beast	Large being	ANIMATE
Spirit, weather	Potent/Volitional	AGENTIVE
Small creature	Thing	NEUTER
Inanimate manipulables	Shape or other physical characteristics	SHAPE, MANIPULABILITY
Food, artifacts	Edibility, utility	THING
Segmentable wholes	Enumerability	COUNT
States-of-being, ideas	Abstract thing	ABSTRACT

a definable class-specific property in a system of conceptual or notional categories associated with the FORMAL categorial distinctions. These notional categories permit us, in fact, to recognize which FORMAL categories we are dealing with in any specific language, as compared with other possible ones. As most people have probably observed in learning French or German or similar European languages, every noun has at least one FORMAL gender category, but some of the assignments cannot be justified to us English speakers in notional terms, that is, in terms of how we conceptualize the objects the French words seem to refer to. Thus, we readily conceptualize tables as objects of utility, and appreciate the FORMAL classification of *table* in the THING class, with its associated notional category centered on this property. But in French the form (*la*) *table*, the closest translation equivalent, is in the FEMININE formal category. So again for *easy chair*, which in French is in the MASCULINE category (*le fauteuil*).

These kinds of disparities, from the point of view of our own English gender system, have frequently been incorrectly used to talk of the total arbitrariness of each language's formal categorizations. This is wrong. As is seen, the notional core of a true FORMAL gender system must differentiate notionally 'male' referents from notionally 'female' referents, whatever other referents are put into the same FORMAL classes as male vs. female. There are many languages with complicated systems of noun classification—like some of the native languages of the Pacific Northwest, or like Navajo and Apache—which have elaborate formal systems of noun categories, such as animacy, agency, shape, manipulability, et cetera. But since they show no formal separation of what we can see as a 'male' vs. 'female' notional core of referents, they do not have gender systems as such, just noun classification systems. The essence of the



relationship is the separation of notionally male vs. notionally female properties by corresponding FORMAL categorizations, whatever else holds about the correspondence between FORMAL and notional systems.

So far we have been characterizing gender systems in terms of the relationship between forms and notional (or semantic) core properties. There is another kind of relationship to note. What object or entity does a user characteristically and differentially refer to when using the particular formally distinguished nominal category? Here, we are not dealing with the overall formal categorizations of linguistic forms as these emerge from the rules of grammar. Nor are we dealing with the categorizations of objects referred to as these can be given notional specification at least at the center or core of the category. We are dealing now with specific acts of referring, using language to pick out entities by applying particular grammatical forms in discourse. And the question at issue is how to characterize the typical (and differential) entity or thing in the real world the category as used is referring to, at its most specific.

We might think of the problem this way: The notional categorizations tend to be inclusive ones, the topmost categories in Table 2 being more highly specified subcategories of ones below; the differential reference categories, on the other hand, tell us what in particular the given formal category, but not any of the others, typically is used to refer to. So comparing the formal AGENTIVE and PERSONAL categories, by definition, we might note, the 'potent/volitional' core property of the AGENTIVE category is included in the notion 'human'; humans characteristically are conceptualized linguistically as though they had the power and will to act as agents. But the typical entity referred to with specifically AGENTIVE (as distinct from PERSONAL) grammatically coded category is not in fact 'human', but is something like a spirit, force of weather, deity, or the like, spoken about with forms that indicate power and will to act as agent at the notional level, but understood as the differentially typical entity for which such a FORMAL category is used. So it is the spirit, force or weather, deity, et cetera that is coded with AGENTIVE rather than PERSONAL, characterizing how languages typically have their machinery applied in acts of differential reference. We would say that the kinds of objects to which we refer with AGENTIVE nominal categories *to the exclusion* of those we indicate with PERSONAL class are things like deities, spirits, weather, et cetera.

The schema in Table 2 is a kind of universally applicable maximal one, of which, with certain adjustments, the system of each particular language, like English, is a specialized subsystem. Characteristically, such adjustments consist of not making the totality of distinctions. But what distinctions we do make in our English gender system show that notionally masculine, feminine, and neuter genders have certain properties in keeping with their placement in the schema. They show what are called asymmetries of *markedness* as well as certain spread beyond the notional core in definable ways.

Sets of examples in Standard English such as *A passenger must have dropped his/her scarf*, demonstrate the asymmetries of markedness. The norm has been to use *his* as the pronoun maintaining reference to the passenger, about which referent we are not given any information in the subject of the sentence beyond human, volitional notional properties, that is, that it is a seemingly PERSONAL coding. This example and many similar ones would indicate that the MASCULINE formal gender category is applicable to any potential human referent, such as in indefinite human reference, and is therefore the so-called unmarked category vis-à-vis the FEMININE. As indicated in Figure 1, languages are quite regular in the way marked and unmarked categories pattern structurally and are implemented in discourse. If some whole universe of possibilities is exhaustively subcategorized by marked and unmarked categories, let us consider a diagram of the partition as here given. If the whole universe of possible notionally human (formally PERSONAL) referents is represented by the large rectangle, singly hatched, under "structure," this is the range of possible reference, all constructions taken into consideration, of the MASCULINE gender category. The range of possible reference with the FEMININE structural category is the smaller, doubly hatched rectangle enclosed: the FEMININE category, when it occurs, is more specific, more informative; it tells us something more definite about the referent(s) than the MASCULINE category, which indicates only notional personhood or humanness from a structural point of view.

By contrast, in discourse implementation, there are really two possibilities in the way MASCULINE and FEMININE categories occur. In such cases as the indefinite one cited previously, the occurrence of the one or the other preserves the asymmetry of inclusiveness of possible reference, shown in our diagram of discourse implementation by the opposed figures of singly and doubly hatched areas, the occurrence of the doubly hatched being the more informative as the means of giving more information. However, in many usages,

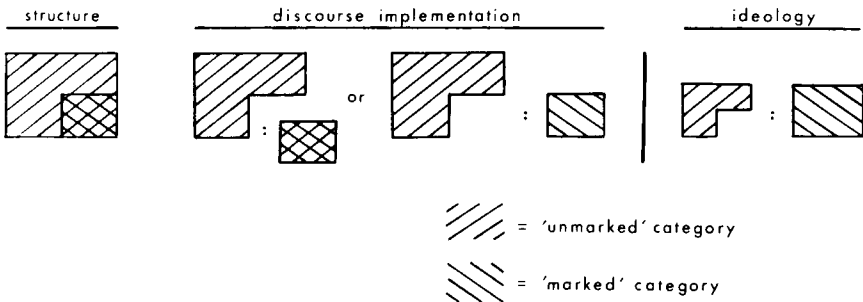


Figure 1. Properties of Marked and Unmarked categories in language.

particularly so-called definite ones, the referential range of the unmarked category MASCULINE is really being contrasted with that of the marked category FEMININE; the exclusive referential range of the one vs. the other is being signaled, as indicated in the mutually exclusive singly-hatched discourse implementation figures. It should be observed that this ambiguity of discourse implementation captures the distinction between the notional categorization on the one hand, and differential reference, on the other. For it is only at the level of what we have termed typical reference that we can say that MASCULINE refers to or picks out male humans, FEMININE to female humans. MASCULINE typically is used to refer differentially to PERSONAL referents of the male sort, represented by the singly hatched remains of the large rectangle, once the small FEMININE rectangle of typical reference is differentiated.

Note that, at this level of typicality of referent of a FORMAL category, we feel queasy about the GENDER categorizations of *infant*, *baby*, that traditionally have governed agreement with *it* in formal markers; that is, these words are treated like those for small, impotent creatures. We tend to feel queasy also with large animals, especially PERSONALized ones such as pets and domesticated beasts, and so use *he* and *she* as their pronouns. In this usage, GENDER is sometimes assigned on a species basis, as a secondary of PERSONALization, so that *dogs* take *he* agreement, *cats* take *she*, in normal circumstances. *Ships* (and *ships* of the air) take *she* agreement in traditional usage, as do *automobiles*, though this has been rapidly changing as a sign of greater “thingness” of the once wondrous and affect-laden creatures. In the following, we can observe this contrast between the straightforward *it* usage in newspaper prose, and the excited, affect-laden *he-she* usage in the narrated drama of the framed quotation by an airline employee:

*Miami*—A Boeing 727 airliner carrying 67 passengers and 7 crew members made a successful emergency belly landing on a runway at Miami International Airport Tuesday night after its landing gear failed to retract fully after takeoff from Palm Beach International Airport. Seven persons suffered minor injuries. “He pulled all of his gear up and slid *her* in on *her* tummy—*her* belly,” Eastern Airlines spokesman Jim Ashlock said. *The airliner*, Eastern Flight 194, was flying to John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York and then Albany, N.Y. Emergency equipment stood by as the *plane* skidded to a stop, sparks flying. (*Chicago Tribune*, 16 February 1983, Sec. 1, p. 5; italics added)

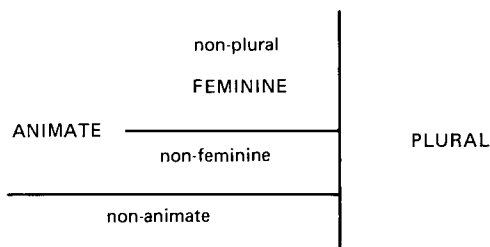
The queasiness we feel about these usages, at the conscious level, comes from translating the FORMAL categories directly into terms of typical differential reference, rather than from having conscious knowledge of the implicit and analyzable structure of gradually inclusive notional principles and FORMAL categories. As indicated to the right of Figure 1, this has profound consequences for the ideology of language, the way that speakers rationalize their

structures. For at the level of ideological reflection about gender, MASCULINE vs. FEMININE is understood as equal and opposite differential “male” vs. “female,” markedness asymmetry notwithstanding.

So observe that the English system of noun phrase categories relevant to pronominalization patterns something like Figure 2 at the FORMAL and notional levels. Starting from the innermost distinctions of the system, (marked) FEMININE is differentiated from (unmarked) non-feminine, the latter also called MASCULINE, and this whole category of (marked) ANIMATE is differentiated from (unmarked) non-animate, the latter also called NEUTER, and both ANIMATE and non-animate are included in the explicitly indicated (unmarked) non-plural, as opposed to the (marked) PLURAL category. Every English noun has at least one gender categorization as its basic formal affiliation in this system, with its associated notional or semantic connotation.

In English, the expression or signal of the category membership occurs elsewhere than on the noun itself, namely, as the particular pronoun that substitutes, under the correct circumstances, for the noun in reference maintenance. And the typical object of reference of the noun/pronoun is to be distinguished from the notional category of gender. The frequent disparity between the two, caused by the fact that this linguistic system, like virtually every other investigated, patterns according to the asymmetries of markedness (as diagrammed in Figure 1), makes us queasy in our usage at the conscious level. And the queasiness persists even in the formally PLURAL category, where the pronominal usage would be uniformly *they*, because of the fact that the notional and referential properties are associated with the noun itself, and persist communicatively even where no explicit pronominal indicator distinguishes them overtly:

One of my pet peeves is the currently popular usage of the word “guys.” You often hear a group of people described as “guys,” even when the group includes women. In



N. B.: MARKED vs. unmarked:  
 non-plural is called 'singular';  
 non-feminine is called 'masculine';  
 non-animate is called 'neuter'

Figure 2. Noun categories of Modern English (gender and number).

fact, it is quite common to hear women addressing a group of other women as “you guys.” This strikes me as strange. Some people I have asked about it, however, have adamantly maintained that when “guy” is in the plural, it has lost all traces of masculinity. I was arguing with a woman about this, and she kept saying, “It may have retained some of the male flavor for you, but it has none in most people’s usage.” I was not convinced, but nothing I could say would budge her from her position. In the end I got lucky, because in a last-ditch attempt to convince me she said, “Why, I’ve even heard guys use it to refer to a bunch of women.” Only after saying it did she realize she had just undermined her own claim. (Hofstadter 1982:30)

The doubly functioning unmarked category, under what is called “contrastive stress,” can be used to emphasize differential referentiality; otherwise it is just as wide in possible reference as the notional categorization allows. (In this passage, by the way, the specificity achieved with the words *woman/women* should be observed.)

Consider another gender system for comparison, within a very different kind of formal system of noun classes. Djirbal (Dixon 1972:308–311), a language of northeastern Australia, shows a typical Australian Aboriginal linguistic system in this respect. As shown in Table 3, there are four FORMAL classes, marked

TABLE 3  
Djirbal (Australia) Noun Classes, Including Gender Reference, Illustrated<sup>a</sup>

I. <i>bayi</i> -class	II. <i>balan</i> -class	III. <i>balam</i> -class	IV. <i>bala</i> -class
Men	Women		Parts of body
Kangaroos	Bandicoots		Meat
Possums	Dog		
Bats	Platypus, echidna		
Most snakes	Some snakes		
Most fishes	Some fishes		
Some birds	Most birds		
Most insects	Firefly, scorpion, crickets		Bees and honey
	Hairy mary grub		
	Anything connected with fire, water		
Moon	Sun and stars		
Storm, rainbow			Wind
Boomerangs	Shields		Yamsticks
Some spears	Some spears		Some spears
Etc.	Some trees	All trees with edible fruit	Most trees
	Etc.		Grass, mud, Stones, noises, Language Etc.

<sup>a</sup> Adapted from Dixon 1972:307.

by the kind of specifier (like German *der/die/das*) that occurs with the noun, each associated with a notional core. The specifically gender aspect of the system emerges in the contrast of Classes I and II, which preserves the distinction between notional 'male' and notional 'female', whatever else they include. Class III includes 'edible fruits and vegetables' and Class IV is the 'everything else' class. Considering now Classes I and II, the notional principles for the first center on attributes or metonymic connections with 'animateness' and '(human) masculinity', while those for the second center on '(human) femininity', 'water', 'fire', 'fighting'. As Dixon observes, referents expectedly in Classes I or II occur in the opposite class when belief-derived attributes so dictate. Thus, birds, spirits of dead human females, are classified in II, except willy wagtails, mythical male figures, which are in I; specially to-be-noted notional properties, especially 'harmfulness (to humans)' of a type of referent, also are indicated by opposite class membership.

It is clear that this system conforms to the general principles of classification set out previously. Class IV is the residual FORMAL class, with Class III a specialization of non-animates by the notional principle of '(flora with) edible parts'. We can further systematize by applying Dixon's own principles of class transfer: Class I is the basic 'animate' class, and Class II its specialization by several different kinds of further notional principles—including for 'humans', 'femininity'—all of which differentiate specific examples of things either themselves animates with special characteristics, or associated with such special animates. Class II is the most specifically characterized notionally-based FORMAL class in this system. It is interesting to observe further that while 'male–female' are notionally distinguished classificatory principles for humans, regardless of the Class I vs. Class II membership of any non-human animate, just as in English, differential reference to a male vs. female referent of any species can be made by using the appropriate classifier on some particular occasion of use, thus *bayi* [Class I] *guda* ('MALE dog'), even though normal usage is *balan* [Class II] *guda* (an animate with very specific distinctness as a domesticated companion of humans, hence transferred from expected Class I into specialized Class II).

### INDEXING PARTICIPANT GENDER IN COMMUNICATION

Such gender systems within noun classifications contrast with gender indexicals. Here, the speaker uses a form in a discourse context, in which the specific form used indicates something about the gender of speaker and/or addressee (or even audience) of the relevant framing discourse context. In the simplest case, the framing context is the ongoing social situation in which

speaker and addressee of the message are participants. It does not matter what is being said, nor whom or what is being referred to; the indexical forms mark something about the context in which they are used. As shown in Table 4, there are several typologically distinct ways in which this can and does occur. Koasati, an American Indian language originally of present-day Alabama, systematically indexes the gender of the speaker as either male or female (Haas 1944), regardless of the gender of the addressee, as represented in Row I. Row II constructs the case in which there is systematic indexing of the gender of the addressee as either male or female, regardless of the gender of the speaker; no pure example of this can be located in the literature, though some languages, for example, Tunica (Haas 1941), have gender distinctions systematic for so-called second-person pronouns, that is, when the referent and the addressee in a speech event are identical (hence mixing the plane of reference-and-predication with the plane of discourse-indexicals). The third type of case, as in Row III, systematically indicates that gender of *both* speaker and addressee are respectively either male or female, as opposed to any other combination of genders of participants. Yana, an American Indian language of California, systematically indexes male speaker communicating to male addressee with one form of words, and all other gender combinations with another (Sapir 1949 [1929]).

To illustrate how this phenomenon typically occurs, in Table 5 we show some of the inflected verb forms of Koasati, with translations. The basic regularity underlying this set of forms (and many others for this stem 'lift' as for all other verbs) is that the female-speaking form is the basic one, with its various inflections for person referred to, mood, tense, et cetera. To derive the male-speaking form, suffix an indexical marker *-s*, the sequence of sounds in whatever is already in inflection plus the additional *-s* frequently changing according to perfectly regular, though complex, rules of the language. So the *-s* indexical form appears clearly in 'he is lifting it [male speaking]', but it is masked when it at least structurally appears after the *č* sound (as in English *church*) of 'you

TABLE 4

"Male vs. Female Speech" Codes Gender Identity of Speaker  
and/or Hearer in Actual Situations of Discourse<sup>a</sup>

Type	Speaker gender	Hearer gender	Example
I.	m:f	m,f	Koasati
II.	m,f	m:f	(may not exist)
III.	m/f:other	m/f:other	Yana

<sup>a</sup>Coding of chart: m = male; f = female; : = 'is distinct from'; , = 'or (indifferently)'; / = 'is respectively distinct from'

TABLE 5  
 Koasati Verb Paradigms (Forms Excerpted from Relevant  
 Indicative and Imperative Sets)

Woman speaking	Man speaking	English glosses
<i>lakáwč</i>	<i>lakáwč</i>	'you are lifting it'
<i>lakawwa</i>	<i>lakawwá-s</i>	'he will lift it'
<i>lakawwil</i>	<i>lakawwis</i>	'I am lifting it'
<i>lakáw</i>	<i>lakáws</i>	'he is lifting it'
<i>lakawčín</i>	<i>lakawčí-s</i>	'don't lift it!'

are lifting it'. Yana has an even more complicated set of suffixes and changes of sounds that differentiate its male-speaking-to-male forms.

We emphasize that it does not matter what is the topic of discourse; the gender indexicals are systematic distinctions of form that indicate who is doing the discoursing/to whom the discoursing is being done. And, in the maximally clear case, such as these, there is a distinct and systematic modification of forms, whether by affixation or changes of sound shapes, or whatever formal means, the sole "meaning" of which is indexical in this way. It should also be noted that (1) everyone in the language community knows and can produce these forms, though appropriateness of usage is defined by the indexical rules of speaker and/or addressee gender, for violations of which, for example, children are corrected by speakers of either gender; and that (2) when a speech situation between characters is set up in discourse as the topic of narration, quoted speech is used for the appropriate gender indexing of the narrated characters. These are metalinguistic usages that reach a high level of consciousness, obviously.

### GENDER AND STATISTICAL INDEXES OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

Such *categorical* (and *overt*) *gender-indexicals* contrast with what we might term *statistical indexes* (and especially *covert* statistical indexes) of women's vs. men's speech that have been discovered in urban areas of advanced, class-stratified societies such as those of Western Europe and America. In these societies, there is a high degree of explicit and codified standardization of the languages through institutional authority including especially the written channel. A tradition of so-called sociolinguistic study has emerged over the last 20 years (Labov 1972) that relates the frequencies of relatively Standard vs. non-Standard forms in samples of actual language production to the membership of speakers in any of a number of cross-cutting social groups and categories, and to the overall task demands of the contextual conditions of the produced samples. That is,



frequencies of Standard/non-Standard linguistic forms can be seen as indexes of both social identities of the speaker and overall contextual “style,” the strength of Standard-inducing demands made by various contexts of language production.

One repeated finding is that socioeconomic class position of language users in general varies directly as the frequency of production of Standard forms, and that there is a peak of contextual “style” effects on Standard-form production not at, but near the top of the stratification continuum. (We return to this later.) When we focus on particular social variables such as gender, a broad regularity seems to emerge, that, controlling for other variables, female speakers overall show significantly greater production of Standard forms (and lesser production of non-Standard) than male speakers, the effect interacting with the effects of social and/or socioeconomic class and contextual style. Thus, Table 6 shows findings summarizing data from Wolfram’s (1969) study of Black English in Detroit (reproduced in Trudgill 1974:91). Scoring production data on the occurrence of non-Standard double negatives for four different socioeconomic classes, it was observed that females show characteristically *lower* non-Standard usages (and hence higher Standard usages) in all four groups, with the effect peaking as an absolute phenomenon (i.e., total absence of non-Standard for female speakers) in the lower middle class, here labeled “upper middle” for the Black English community by virtue of calibration techniques.

In effect, these are gradient or statistical indexes of male vs. female gender of speakers of English, though operating in terms of a cultural system of Standardization in a class-stratified society. There is no special formal marker the presence or absence of which we can associate exclusively with the gender identity of the speaker, as in Koasati, et cetera. Rather, the strength of productive realization of Standardization, yielding frequency effects in actual linguistic production, is what seems to differentiate the two gender categories of speakers.

TABLE 6

Gradient or “Statistical” Frequency Data on Male vs. Female  
Speech in English: Example from Multiple Negation  
(. . . *Ain’t* . . . *No* . . .) in Detroit Non-Standard Speech<sup>a</sup>

Gender	Percent age of multiple negation of total production <sup>b</sup>			
	UMC	LMC	UWC	LWC
Male	6.3	32.4	40.0	90.1
Female	0.0	1.4	35.6	58.9

<sup>a</sup>From Trudgill (1974:91).

<sup>b</sup>LMC = lower middle class; LWC = lower working class;  
UMC = upper middle class; UWC = upper working class.

A most revealing comparative case is presented by the participant pronominals ('I', 'you') of Thai, where the indexicals of gender interact very regularly with gender in reference, since reference is to either speaker or addressee in the speech situation. As seen in Table 7 (summarizing data from Cooke 1970:11–15, 19–39), we can give the “meanings” of a sample of first-person pronominals—there are many more in the total repertoire of the language—in terms of the parameters defining specific speech situations in which they would be appropriately used. Note that they all refer to speaker, so in this gross referential sense are all “saying the same thing.” But we must take into account the gender and age-status of both speaker and hearer, and certain further *relational* characteristics holding of the speaker–addressee dyad: the relative social status—akin to ‘deference entitlement’ (Shils 1982)—of addressee with respect to speaker (thus, addressee higher-than/same-as/lower-than speaker); the degree of intimacy presupposed between speaker and addressee (and, in the instance, the intimacy that can be effected, intersubjectively called up, by use of the particular form); (non)restraint of social interaction, the speaker’s degree of adherence to the standards of social interaction for this contextual dyad.

So gender itself interacts with several other variables of the speech situation in a complex pattern of both referential and indexical regularities. Some of these can be noted for later comparison (see Table 8 for summary). It can be seen for any given form otherwise determined, in usage the higher the relative status of the addressee with respect to the speaker, the greater the intimacy between speaker and addressee; that is, there is an inverse relationship between status of the *speaker* and intimacy between speaker and addressee in the use of any given form. Note for the pair *dichǎn* and *chǎn*, female speaking, that intimacy increases from 0 to +1 as relative addressee status goes from equal (/) to higher (+), and that intimacy similarly changes as relative addressee status goes from lower (–) to equal (/), other things remaining generally constant. So any particular form can be an index of high-status and intimate addressee, or low-status non-intimate addressee, relative to speaker. Looked at across forms, then, the indexicals reveal a system in which status is the inverse of intimacy, allowing the complementarity of indexical possibilities. For *ʔaadta-maa*, spoken by a Buddhist priest, the opposite is the case, since such a high-status speaker can only speak to status equals or status inferiors. Note also that the form *chǎn*, male speaking, is used equivalently in indexing either of two situations, one where the addressee is of lower relative status, and the other where addressee is female. Finally, male speakers may use the same form, *phǒm*, in a neutral and standardized usage across all addressee relative statuses, while female speakers must switch forms in covering the dimension of addressee relative status; so female speakers must more elaborately and unambiguously mark hearer-status asymmetries.

Gender-Sensitive Participant-Pronouns<sup>a,c</sup>

Thai first-person (I) pronouns	Speaker		Hearer		Relation of hearer-to-speaker			
	Female	Adult	Female	Adult	Status	Intimate	Speaker n.r. <sup>c</sup>	Qualifications
<i>ʔaadtamaa</i>	-	/+		/+	-	+1	0	Speaker Buddhist priest
	-	/+		/+	/	0	0	Speaker, hearer Buddhist priest
<i>dichǎn</i>	+	+			+	+1	0	
	+	+			/	0	0	
<i>phǒm</i>	-				(/+)	(0)	0	
<i>chǎn</i>	-	/+			-	(+1)		
	-	/+	+			+1		
	+				-	(0)		
	+				/	+1		

Adapted from Cooke (1970:38, chart 10).

<sup>a</sup>Indicate gender of at least the referent (speaker, hearer, or both), and frequently of both referent and the other participant. In these pronouns, referent is always the speaker.

<sup>b</sup>Codings of chart: 00 = no; negative; + = yes; positive; / = neutral; equal; numeral = degree; () = "a connotative suggestion of."

<sup>c</sup>Speaker nonrestraint = a certain defiance of or nonconformity to underlying standards or more proper usage on the part of the speaker.

TABLE 8  
Generalizations and Observations<sup>a</sup>

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Observations

- a. Same form spoken to one of higher status increases intimacy value; except for Buddhist priest speaking, where inverse relationship is found.
- b. Same form is spoken to female as to lower-status hearer.
- c. Female speaker must switch forms in going from lower- to equal- to higher-status hearer.

Generalization

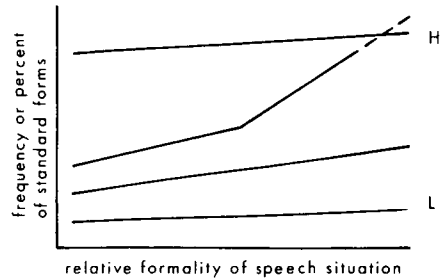
- a. Increase of status of speaker with regard to hearer is inverse of increase of intimacy between hearer and speaker.
  - b. Analogical distinctions in Table 7 are female:male:Buddhist priest::lower:neutral:high status.
- 

<sup>a</sup>Observations are about the gender-sensitive participant-pronouns as presented in Table 7.

Such data are representative of many similar first-and second-person forms. Taken all into account, on this basis there is a system of indexical values of the forms that demonstrates an inverse relationship between a person's status and the presumed intimacy with which communication takes place; Buddhist priests, at the absolute top of the status scale, confirm this complementarily. The unmarked or residual case is male adult speaker, in the middle of a pair of analogical distinctions: female is to male (is to Buddhist priest) as lower status is to neutral status (is to high status). There is, then, what we might term a *metaphorical* or *analogical* relationship between gender-indexing in Thai and relative status indexing of addressee, such that female speaking to male is as lower status speaking to higher status. Such a relationship indexed linguistically seems to correspond to a larger kind of relationship in society, on the one hand, and, most importantly, to a reality *referred to* by the pronoun *I*. It is thus the overlap of the two systems that reinforces the indexical values *in referring*.

Given such a categorical case illustrating clearly this principle of pragmatically (metaphorically) linked indexical systems involving the contextual dimension of gender, formally identical to a potent referential system, we can return to the kind of gender indexing found in languages such as English, et cetera, in which statistical frequency differentiation of forms goes along with gender-identity distinctions. In Thai, we saw an analogy between male:female (gender) indexed as higher:lower (relative status-ranking). Given what sociolinguists have discovered about variability of occurrence of Standardized forms, we might see that this analogy holds up for English and similar languages as well.

Figure 3 illustrates in schematic fashion—actual parameters and slopes differ from study to study—repeatedly found relationships. Considering an appropriate linguistic form relevant to Standardization, for each of a range of ranked social or socioeconomic categories/groups, we can plot the frequency of oc-



**Figure 3.** Sociolinguistic stratification of markers in usage.

currence of relatively Standardized linguistic production as a function of the so-called contextual “style,” the “formality” of the situation, including all those institutional and interpersonal factors that might be Standard-inducing for those with some allegiance to the Standard. Characteristically, lowermost groups show low Standardized production that remains low across increasingly Standard-demanding situations. At the opposite extreme, highest groups show relatively constant, though increasing, Standardization. In between, there are increasing degrees of Standardization of production with increase in ranked position, and, interestingly, increase in the slope of the frequency changes in going from the least to the most formal contextual conditions. For the group near, but not quite at the top, in particular, one characteristically finds that in the most extreme Standard-demanding situations, the produced frequencies surpass both the uppermost group and even surpass the structural norms (“hypercorrection”).

In fluidly stratified societies in particular, Labov (1972) and others have discovered robust results of just this sort of statistical variability. Linguistically Standard vs. non-Standard forms occur such that their frequencies have identifiable indexical values of “Standardness” and its connotations about the social position of the speaker. There is a kind of “linguistic insecurity” before the Standard manifested most by the ranked groups that are not quite at the top of the stratification, as shown in the very pronounced shifts in linguistic production across the sample of formality conditions. Such linguistic insecurity, it has been found, goes together with several kinds of attitudinal and other evaluative results, such as rating the users of relatively Standard forms more highly on a great number of positive or desirable status-related and personality attributes; overreporting (even overscoring) one’s own frequency of Standard usage (even as categorical), while underreporting one’s own frequency of non-Standard; being easily induced to hypercorrection, the production of non-normal forms through an avoidance of only apparently, but not really, non-Standard ones (. . . *between you and I* . . .); being generally more sensitive to linguistic forms along the dimensions of Standard and non-Standard on all tests. In general, for socioeconomic stratification, the lower-to-mid middle class

demonstrates such linguistic insecurity to the greatest degree, along with characteristic production curves as discussed previously.

It turns out also that when women vs. men are examined in this light, the same characteristics emerge independent of the other variables by which native speakers can be categorized. There is, in this sense, a characteristic “women’s language,” as it were, that is a socially real phenomenon in these kinds of societies. It is a statistically (not, as in Koasati, categorically) indexed orientation to the Standard language, the explicitly codified norm of society, with an indexically significant frequency of productive differentiation from men that almost makes us expect women to speak more “correctly” than men. It is also a covert (not, as in Thai, overt) phenomenon, in that only when we discover the statistical relationship between Standardization and stratification, does the place of women’s language use and attitudes within *that* configuration allow us to see that there is an implicit identification of the type: women are to men as relatively lower is to relatively higher status group (along the dimension of socioeconomic class). Hence, we might say, it might be puzzling that those who speak “best”—and are more oriented to do so—do not also enjoy the power of those usually at the top in the conventional appreciation of the benefits of “Standardized” demeanor and behavior.

That this configuration is a culture-specific fact is seen comparatively along both dimensions of Standardization (and hence “correctness” in language use), gender identity and status position. For as Ochs (1974) has shown, the Merina (Malagasy) culture of good language is such that men speak correctly and even elegantly, while women (and children, and Frenchmen) do not, and ought not to. And as Irvine (1975, 1978) has shown, among the Wolof (Senegal) there are quasi-caste like distinctions between “nobles” and “*griots*” (‘bards’), and for these social identities, the higher the noble, the less correct is his language; for speaking correctly—and loudly, fluently, ornately—is left to the “*griots*” as work really unbecoming the inherent nature of nobility.

Such, let us say, is the pragmatic fact of usage. Note the contrast between two completely independent aspects of language. First, there is the referential gender system as an unmarked:marked categorical relationship between masculine and feminine structural and notional distinctions in noun phrases. Second, there is the pragmatic usage system, with its inherent value of indexing analogical links among various social distinctions manifested in—and hence relevant to understanding—social interaction. Let us turn now to ideology.

Feminist theory of language, and its analysis and prescription for linguistic reform, seems correctly and accurately to perceive the pragmatic metaphorical relationship between gender identity and status, though much is cast into the rhetoric of power in a more abstract and less culturally situated form. But the ideological location of the cause of this metaphorical relationship demonstrates perhaps the most characteristic “distorting” effects in the mode of operation

of ideologies of social forms like language. For, writers on the subject have identified the cause of the analogy as the system of gender in the functional plane of reference and predication, the noun classification system, and related referential and predicational facts, and have seen the origin of the indexical facts in the existence of the referential ones. Moreover—and again, as we noted previously, quite characteristic of ideological perceptions of language—the referential categories, with all their autonomous formal structure, are perceived to be not formal categories, nor even notional ones, but as directly referential according to the specific, typical, and differential referentiality of the category in its most formally unconstrained occurrences.

Sometimes, writers see a “natural” basis for phenomena like the asymmetric markedness of gender categories, interpreted referentially, as in the following:

Words with a particular application to the condition of women attract to themselves a “women only” quality, a precision of reference that limits their use to a notional “world of women” with which men need not concern themselves. In the recent past, this “world of women” had a perfectly real existence. . . . In this “world of women,” one may find a kind of ur-language of sisterhood. (Carter 1980:229)

But, notwithstanding this expectable specialization—or markedness—of “women only” words, those of the feminine gender category, there is frequently a counter feeling that the categorical facts themselves are unjust:

I leave the reader to draw *his* own conclusions. Please observe, from the above sentence, that the English language does indeed assume *everybody* to be male unless *they* are proved to be otherwise; and this kind of usage is, simply, silly, because it does not adequately reflect social reality, which is the very least one can expect language to do. (Carter 1980:234; italics added)

The crux of the matter turns on the view that Standard language both is and ought to be a *truthful* reference-guide to “reality,” a basic fact about our own Standard Average European (SAE) anglophone culture’s overall ideology of the nature of language. It is in these terms that the arguments on both sides of the issue have been played out. For proponents of a new linguistic Standard, the used of *his* vs. *her* in contexts such as the above quotation becomes the linguistic problem as diagnosed. The elimination of the older Standard usage from our pronominal (or, more precisely, reference-maintenance) system becomes the prescription, with a number of different alternatives being proposed in the varied literature on the subject.

This engagement of native user’s ideology of linguistic expression of gender with the systems of referential structure and pragmatic structure is very much an ongoing issue, with some linguistic changes the probable outcome. The nature of the processes involved can perhaps be better grasped by historical comparison with an earlier linguistic change in English for which the results are “complete,” to the extent we might use this term.

### A PARALLEL: PERSONAL DEICTICS IN ENGLISH

The linguistic change to be considered has resulted in the contemporary configuration of a different aspect of the structure of Modern English, that of so-called person and number. As shown in Figure 4, the Modern English system has a distinction of first, second, and third PERSON, which anchors some topic of discourse in relationship to the participants of the communicative situation. There is also a distinction of a singular and non-singular NUMBER in the first person, and one of plural and non-plural in the third person, the third person non-plural showing GENDER distinctions through the substitutive pronoun schema we characterized previously. It is observed that there is no apparent number distinction of second-person category, in the Standard language at least.

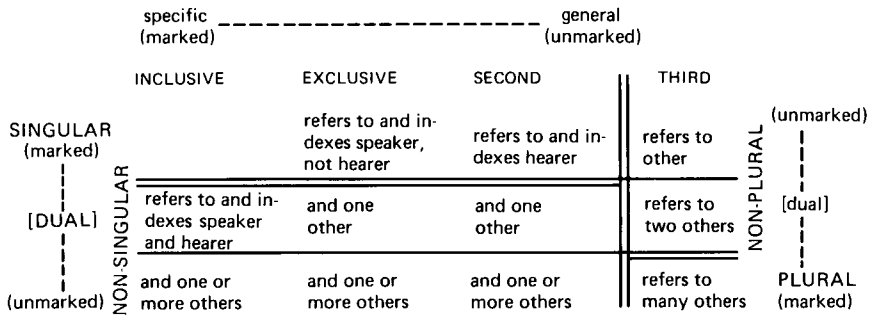
The English system is one of many different possibilities that are to be expected in referential-and-predicational language structures for person and number in noun phrases, as shown in Figure 5. The category of person allows a speaker to make reference to some person(s) or thing(s) relative to the contextual roles of speaker and addressee. This dimension is given along the top of the chart, with their common grammatical names, so that each column is a distinct category type. Three different degrees of numerosity are provided for in the rows (though they are labeled differently for the first three person columns vs. the fourth); these are ways of indicating something about the quantification of the referent(s).

It is seen that the INCLUSIVE category is always NON-SINGULAR in number, referring to both speaker and addressee at the minimum, the DUAL without, the PLURAL with, some other referent(s). The so-called EXCLUSIVE can refer to speaker uniquely in the SINGULAR, to speaker and one other referent in the DUAL, and to speaker and many other referents in the PLURAL. Similarly for the SECOND-PERSON, which communicates a reference to a set of persons centered about the addressee, uniquely so in SINGULAR and addressee plus other(s) in two forms of NON-SINGULAR. The

FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
[SINGULAR] /		$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \textit{She} \\ \textit{He} \\ \textit{It} \end{array} \right\}$ ; Noun [non-plural]
[non-singular] <i>We</i>	<i>You</i>	<hr style="width: 100%;"/> <i>They</i> : Noun [PLURAL]

Figure 4. Modern English referential categories of noun phrases (Person, Number, Gender).





**Figure 5.** Universal Possibilities of noun phrase categories of Person and Number (with markedness relations).

THIRD PERSON categories do not necessarily create referential sets centered on the participant roles, and hence, in the familiar form of reasoning, seem differentially to refer to entities specifically excluding them; these are the “other(s)” of the communicative act, as it were. In the THIRD PERSON, the PLURAL is the marked number category, specifically communicating the notion of more-than-one of whatever is referred to (as distinct from PLURAL in the other persons, where the referents are inherently different, speaker and/or addressee with or without some other(s).) Within the NON-PLURAL, we can differentiate a marked DUAL and an unmarked SINGULAR. For where there is a grammatical contrast in number for THIRD PERSON forms, the SINGULAR is used to characterize not only a single thing, but also the abstract essence of things, the prototypical case of a kind of thing, the general case of any of the category of possible referents; as well, it is the category that lexically codes abstract and “non-count” entities of reference.

From this configuration, it would appear that the THIRD PERSON SINGULAR is the maximally unmarked category in the system, and indeed, a great number of entailed predictions about linguistic structure following from this are in fact observable in the way languages operate and change. One such will emerge later, insofar as the particular unmarked position of the THIRD PERSON NON-PLURAL vs. PLURAL in the referential-semantic system appears to be crucial to understanding the rise of the particular Modern English person and number system seen in Figure 4.

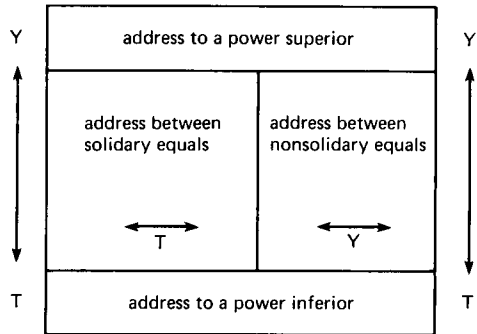
For, what strikes us immediately about the person–number system of modern English, is that from the referential-semantic point of view, there would seem to be an irregularity in the SECOND PERSON category, the absence of a SINGULAR/NON-SINGULAR distinction as found in the FIRST PERSON, or a PLURAL/NON-PLURAL distinction as found in the THIRD PERSON. Was this always the case in English? And if not, how has it arisen? If

language structure is a purely referential-and-predicational semantic mechanism, we would expect that if there is a number distinction in the other two persons, there would be one for the SECOND PERSON, consistent with Figure 5. Or, we would ask, are there other factors that either can or must enter into the constitution of a linguistic structure in its categorial details that, as it were, override the straight referential-and-predicational constraints? Such, I argue, is the case here, in which a specific historical explanation is to hand involving the social history of England and the way it has operated as a determinate force on the emerging modern Standard English language. The SECOND PERSON pronominal categories have been forms swept up into a pragmatic system of indexicals of potent social value, and exposed to the shaping influence of ideological struggle and change.

Philological evidence indicates that Old English had a pronominal system that was more regular in the SECOND PERSON categories, showing SINGULAR, PLURAL, and, until perhaps into the thirteenth century, DUAL distinctions of NUMBER. The pronominal forms also showed distinctions of CASE, indicating their function in the syntactic organization of propositional clauses, NOMINATIVE for 'subject' function, ACCUSATIVE/DATIVE for 'object' functions of various sorts, et cetera. In the SINGULAR, the SECOND PERSON forms show NOMINATIVE *thu* (pronounced something like [θu·]) and DATIVE/ACCUSATIVE *the* [θe·]), forms that survive into the modern period as *thou* and *thee* ([ðaw] and [ðɪy]) by fairly regular developments of their sounds. In the PLURAL, the counterpart Old English forms are *ge* ([ʝe·]) and *e·ow*, surviving into the modern period as *ye* ([yɪy]) and *you* ([yUw]). We still recognize these four forms, though only *you* survives in contemporary Standard usage. What we outline here is the change in meaningfulness that led ultimately to the nonuse of all but one of these forms.

In the thirteenth century, it turns out, under the cultural domination of Anglo-Norman French, cultivated speakers of English took over the French distinctions between a so-called polite and a so-called familiar second person pronominal usage. This distinction of referring to a single addressee either with the categorially SECOND SINGULAR form or with the categorially SECOND PLURAL form, gives to the formal distinction *thou/thee* vs. *ye/you* a new set of social-indexical values overlain over the strictly referential distinction of NUMBER. The social practice of French usage, associated with upper-status position and good breeding, was simply transferred by translation of the appropriate categories, *thou/thee/thine* for (modern) *tu/te/ton/tien*, *ye/you/your(s)* for *vous/votre/vôtre* (to give the different CASE forms), with indexical values of a particular sort.

As Brown and Gilman showed in their classic article (1960) on the subject, we might, as in Figure 6 (where I have substituted English abbreviations), consider the indexical values of *thou*, et cetera ("T") vs. *ye*, et cetera ("Y") in terms



**Figure 6.** Discourse-situation relationships of participant Power and Solidarity (intimacy) indexed by *thee* (T) and *you* (Y). T (After Brown and Gilman 1960.)

of two social dimensions of the interpersonal context of communication—ones that we will recognize immediately from the Thai case discussed previously. First, there is the asymmetrical relationship of “power” (or status) superiority/inferiority of speaker with respect to addressee. One refers to a superior addressee with Y, speaking “up,” as it were, and to an inferior addressee with T, speaking “down,” as it were. This is indicated in the figure by the directionality of arrows along the vertical dimension. Second, particularly operative for status equals, there is the symmetrical relationship of “solidarity” (or interpersonal identification, intimacy) between speaker and addressee. One refers to a solidary addressee with T, and to a nonsolidary addressee with Y.

It can be seen at once that this system, which became established for early Modern English down to the seventeenth century, demonstrates once again the inverse relationship between status ranking and intimacy, the very signal of speaking to a superior being that of speaking nonintimately. It is understandable why the public language, the language of communication dependent upon positional status identities, used a uniform Y in SECOND PERSON reference. It is also understandable why upper class persons, and persons of breeding in general, apparently used mutual Y as an index of their status as such, an important fact for the later history of the indexical system here. Certainly, by about 1600, the symmetrical Y was the usage of cultivation, with indexical value of such, and metonymically the value of the form itself (as opposed to T) was a reflection of the contextual parameters it indexed.

There is, then, a kind of double functional value of the SECOND PERSON pronouns, (1) to refer to and to index the addressee as individual (*thou/thee*) or as the defining member of a group (*ye/you*), and (2) to index the power (asymmetrical T/Y) and solidarity (symmetrical T/Y) relationships of speaker and addressee, according to a complex and interacting set of indexical meanings. Some formal readjustments took place, to be sure, such as the gradual loss in the sixteenth century of the grammatical distinction between *ye* [NOMINA-

TIVE] and *you* [DATIVE/ACCUSATIVE] in favor of more homogeneous *you* in all CASE functions.

But the basic systematicity of indexical usage remained as such into the seventeenth century. Wyld reports, for example, that

Sir Thomas More's [1478–1535] son-in-law, Roper, in his *Life of that famous man*, represents him as addressing the writer—'Sonne Roper'—as *thou*, *thee*, but himself as using *you* in speaking to Sir Thomas More. (Wyld 1920:330)

Brown and Gilman (1960), too, cite many examples that illustrate the social dimensions of usage, including the 1603 speech of the attorney general Sir Edward Coke addressing Sir Walter Raleigh (1552?–1618) at the latter's trial for treason: "All . . . was at thy instigation, thou viper; for I 'thou' thee, thou traitor!" Adding insult to injury, Coke not only repeats the downwardly directed T form, but uses a delocutionary construction (Benveniste 1966) with a verb derived from quoting the form *thou*, that is, 'to [say,] "thou" to someone,' pointing out that he is treating him as a *thou*, not a *you*, as would be expected both in ordinary cultivated (especially ennobled) society, and in the formal situation of a trial. Note that at the trial of Charles I in 1649, both the defendant and the Lord President of the court address each other with symmetrical *you* (Barber 1976:48–50). As Barber observes,

The use of *you* between equals among the upper classes was imitated by those below them, and the usage spread down the social hierarchy. By 1600, *you* was the normal unmarked form of the singular pronoun in all classes with any pretensions to politeness, while *thou* was the form which carried special implications (e.g., of [speaker's] emotion, social superiority). (Barber 1976:210)

By 1700, however, the use of *thou*, the inherited SECOND SINGULAR pronoun, had run its course as a productive form. Why?

The seventeenth century in England, one of considerable political, religious, and intellectual upheaval, is, in a real sense, the formative period of modern anglophone culture. The central transformations we recognize for this period can be viewed from one or another of these institutional perspectives, but it is clear that there were no such distinctions at the time. It is interesting, for example, that political struggles were played out from the pulpits of the various Protestantisms, official and sect specific, engaging with the authority of the state. Intellectual life was characterized by a discourse of divines at the universities and elsewhere, as much as by anyone else.

Through all this, certain trends of the seventeenth century should be distinguished, relevant to our argument. (See, for example, Haller 1938, Jones 1953, Barber 1976.) First, the religious idiom made problematic the nature of "truth," whether Divine or otherwise, and how this truth was or could be represented, in language and similar symbolic systems in terms of which people engaged the world. To different degrees, various kinds of Protestant belief lo-

cated Divine truths within each individual, whose personal experience, externalizable in language, et cetera, thus counted as much as or more than any formal doctrine elaborated through established church worship, through which individuals could be made subservient to the officially given 'truths' of institutions. Once this ideological stance emerged in the evolving anti-Church rhetoric, there was nothing to prevent its being taken beyond the phase of establishing an autochthonous and politically sanctioned Church of England (against "Romish" authority), to countering the very authority of any church/state as against the inspiration of individual religious—and, quite dangerously, civil—experience and belief. And the extreme "left," as we might now call it, pushed equalitarianism and voluntarism to its limits and beyond. The seventeenth century in England emerged as a series of constant struggles between the authority of institutions—Crown, Church, et cetera—and the authority of what we might term the empirical experience of individuals. Language, as the primary system of representational consciousness and interpersonal communication of such, was swept up into the politico-religious and intellectual transformations in several ways.

First, parallel to trends observable in Continental countries, there is the emergence of a consciousness of English as a "language," with an emblematic value as something representing the distinctness of the English nation. Grammar, style, rhetoric, et cetera become problems for English as a language as much as for Latin, Greek, Hebrew, et cetera (See Jones 1953:272–323, Michael 1970, Barber 1976:65–142). English is seen more and more as a vehicle that goes along with opposition to the received traditions of educational, intellectual, religious, civil authority represented by such classical languages and their rhetorical hypertrophy.

Consequently, it is not surprising that the Baconians, in their struggle to fashion 'true' empirical science, or "natural philosophy," rejected Latin and Greek and furthered the cause of a plain English, unadorned by rhetorical embellishment, which was seen as an impediment to 'truth' and logic and the practical availability of the language-external world to all. As a kind of culmination of this movement, the founding of the Royal Society in 1660 focused issues of the relationship of linguistic and symbolic representation to external empirical truth, and authoritatively decided in favor of a plain English style of scientific discourse. As Bishop Thomas Sprat wrote of this group of natural philosophers in his *History of the Royal-Society of London* in 1667:

They have therefore been most rigorous . . . to reject all the amplifications, digressions, and swellings of style: to return back to the primitive purity, and shortness, when men deliver'd so many *things*, almost in an equal number of *words*. They have exacted from all their members, a close, naked, natural way of speaking; positive expressions; clear senses; a native easiness: bringing all things as near the Mathematical plainness, as they can. (quoted from Barber 1976:132)

Observe Sprat's italicization of the problem of denotative representation: words for things, in which scientific discourse should strive for truth through a "mathematical" plainness, whereby English could become a transparent window to truths both formulable and communicable in it (cf. Jones 1953:310-311).

What is remarkable is that this same conceptualization about language emerges in the various "leveling" sects of Puritanism, who see classical learning as well as rhetorical ornamentation as evils of established, prideful religious authority that work against the true glory of personal belief, expressed in the so-called Plain Style of English. Haller observes about the role of such sects as over against the established Anglicanism or later Presbyterianism of a ruling establishment, that

[t]hey are important chiefly as symptoms of the democratization of English society and culture which was steadily being advanced by Puritan preaching in general, by the translation and publication of the Bible, and by the spread of literacy. The end toward which the whole movement was tending was the reorganization of society on the basis of a Bible-reading populace. Calvinism helped this movement forward by setting up a new criterion of aristocracy in opposition to the class distinctions of the existing system. But there was also a concept of equalitarianism implicit in Calvinism which transcended aristocracy and which the necessity the preachers were under of evangelizing the people brought steadily to the fore. . . . It became difficult not to think that election and salvation by the grace of God were available to everyone who really desired them. Moreover, once the Calvinist preachers admitted that the only true aristocracy was spiritual and beyond any human criterion, they had gone a long way toward asserting that all men in society must be treated alike because only God knows who is superior. The main body of preachers, to be sure, professional intellectuals with their own positions and prestige at stake, held to the notion of a national church, reformed from within, and did their best to keep the disruptive implications of their doctrines from being pressed too far. But granted their premises, it was natural that there should start up among them as well as about them many impatient individualists unwilling to wait upon the slow processes of reform. (Haller 1938:178)

The most radical theology implied secular equalitarianism along with a separatist notion of the congregation as a unit through which, by belief, an individual makes a commitment to be bound to God. Separatism from the national church, notes Haller,

was the extreme expression of the religious individualism of Puritan faith and doctrine, the individualism which drastically leveled all men before God. The dissenting preachers, moreover, were happy to find converts wherever they could, and found them in greater and greater numbers among men who by any leveling process felt themselves likely to gain rather than lose. . . . Consequently, the notions of universal grace and free will, which the main body of Puritan preachers opposed so bitterly in the church but which were the natural expression in theological terms of some of the most important implications of Calvinism on the moral and social plane, these flourished among the sects. (1938:181)

And these flourished particularly among the Friends, or Quakers as they

came to be called by midcentury, who wrapped themselves in Plain English language as an index of their Truth.

Indeed, one of the central attacks of George Fox (1624–1691), the founder of the Religious Society of Friends, was on the symbolism of such practices as the pronominal usage of *ye/you* in its acquired indexical values. For the Friends, the indexical values of saying *ye/you* for deference to the addressee, or for elegance of style, were the very opposite of the civil equality of all people before God. Early Quaker leaders delivered many explicit pronouncements on the subject, their ideological rationalizations about this system of indexicals, turning it into a matter of truth and falsity to the “natural,” original, and holy order of things. Midcentury Quakers were using *thou/thee* exclusively for the SECOND SINGULAR form, never *ye/you*, a societally shocking, even insulting usage that was explicitly subversive in intent to “prideful” and “ambitious” authority, both religious and civil.

Quaker address with *thou/thee* played upon the fact that English scriptural prose was translated into this form, maintained as a distinct functional register from the T/Y usage in polite interpersonal usage: hence, these were people *truly* of The Book once more on earth, an indexically implied arrogation to the sect of a legitimacy beyond any others—indeed, of a legitimacy pointedly beyond the authorities of the Crown, to and from whom uniform Y (vs. T) usage was expected in the other functional system. “Thou and Thee was a sore cut to proud flesh,” wrote George Fox in his *Journal*,

and them that sought self-honour, who, though they would say it to God and Christ, could not endure to have it said to themselves. So that we were often beaten and abused, and sometimes in danger of our lives, for using those words to some proud men, who would say, “What! you ill-bred clown, do you Thou me?” as though Christian breeding consisted in saying You to one; which is contrary to all their grammars and teaching books, by which they instructed their youth (1919) [1694]:381–382).

In 1660, Fox, along with followers John Stubs and Benjamin Furley, published *A Battle-Door for Teachers and Professors to Learn Singular and Plural; You to Many, and Thou to One: Singular One, Thou; Plural Many, You*. Addressed to the learned with righteous irony—for a *battledore* is a schoolchild’s primer—the authors start from the premise “that the propriety of every language is kept in the Bible” (Fox, Stubs, and Furley 1660:20) from God. They survey the referential category of number in a large variety of then-known languages to derive the divine truthfulness of using *thou* exclusively in singular address, and also to oppose the degeneracy of the form *you*, usage of which is ultimately blamed on errant, established Protestants and, thence, on the pope.

This is a remarkable, though expectable form of rationalization, in which the referential category of number plays the decisive role in what we may call *literalizing the indexical usage of T/Y as a metaphor of it*. It is not merely a question of opposing the T/Y usage as such; it is a matter of the pure referential

truth of the category of NUMBER. Note, then, that in effect the category of NUMBER is taken at the level of typicality of differential reference (cf. the book's subtitle), with no attention to the asymmetries of markedness that differentiate NUMBER in the second vs. third PERSONS (cf. Figure 5). As shown in Table 9, the configuration of NUMBER in the *unmarked* THIRD PERSON—the category of PERSON with which we can objectify an “other” in abstract terms for rationalizing processes—imposes itself on the T/Y differentiation through this literalizing effect. The *you* of power, as Brown and Gilman (1960) termed it, is rationalized as a *false* and pridefully arrogant “pluralization” of a basically and differentially singular *thou*: Thus, by what right and with what metaphorical truth does any *individual* other get referred to by a PLURAL form? The NON-SINGULAR of the SECOND PERSON is taken to be differentially equivalent in reference to the PLURAL of the THIRD PERSON.

Hence the indexical value of Quaker Plain Speech “T” in respect to the norms of the wider English society. As shown in Figure 7, to Friends the form *thou*, has the indexical-referential value of SECOND SINGULAR pronominal, at the same time as (1) used symmetrically, it indexes speaker and addressee membership in the particular ideological and religious group (i.e., their solidarity), or (2) used asymmetrically, it indexes speaker nonadherence to status marking as a function of formality (i.e., politeness, deference) in language.

To the larger society, by contrast, the symmetric usage of T is highly marked as informal solidarity, camaraderie or intimacy, while asymmetric usage is highly marked for unequivocal status differential, as we saw earlier. So there is a polarization of usage in which, as Table 10 schematizes, the older T/Y system is reevaluated into indexicality of a new sort, that marking *speaker* identity. Asymmetric usage has exactly the opposite values for Friends and others, and is the cause of strife; for just those who might be “*thou*”ing Friends within the T/Y system, magistrates and other officers of the Crown speaking to such decided status inferiors, would use *you* in official situations, in which Friends would be *thouing* them, expressing in their own system defiance of worldly pride and

TABLE 9

Literalizing the Metaphor of ‘Power’—Analogy from the Unmarked Function of Reference

THIRD PERSON ‘NUMBER’: (Speaking <i>of</i> others)	‘One’ Unmarked interpreted as specifically ‘not’ marked	vs.	‘More than one’ Marked
SECOND PERSON ‘NUMBER’: (Speaking <i>to/of</i> another)	‘One addressee’ ( <i>thee</i> )	vs.	‘More than one addressee’ ( <i>ye/you</i> )



$$\text{"T"} = \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{reference to and index of addressee;} \\ \text{index of speaker and addressee member-} \\ \text{ship in group (i.e., solidarity);} \\ \text{non-adherence to status-marking as} \\ \text{a function of formality in language.} \end{array} \right.$$

vs. "Y" which negates all these values for the speaker/hearer of the form.

**Figure 7.** Indexical and referential values of Quaker Plain Speech.

ambition! Friends use symmetric T, and hence others had to avoid it, lest they be mistaken for members of the sect; Friends avoid symmetric Y, and hence others must use it only. Consequently, a new system emerges, in which societal norms abandon T decisively as a usage indexing speaker as Quaker and take up the invariant usage of Y. A STRUCTURAL or FORMAL change in the norms of English has been effected.

To recapitulate, a particular formal indexical distinction gets incorporated into English through borrowing, skewing usage of formal referential categories organized according to universal and particular structural constraints. In time, this usage is strengthened by an emerging ideology of formal, standard language as an instrument of public authority. Against this, an ideology of equality and private revelation takes up the question of this indexical distinction, finding in it the very antithesis of a (differential-)truth-in-category doctrine of the representational value of language—to which assertedly more fundamental standard all linguistic usage, including indexical conventions, is held. Such a view of language characteristically starts with the structure of unmarked categories of reference, literalizing indexicals as metaphors of such referential categories, and rationalizes usage in terms of the metaphor as analyzed. In this particular case, the nature of the now highly ideologized usage is such that the system of referential categories itself, as a structural norm, is changed decisively in a direction away from the innovative ideological view.

TABLE 10

Older and Innovative Systems Compared for Evolution of T/Y System

Older, post-Norman system	Ideologically marked system	
	Quakers	Non-Quakers
Asymmetrical		
Y "up"/T "down"	—	—
symmetric-solidary T	+	—
symmetric-nonsolidary Y	—	+

## INDEXICAL/REFERENTIAL IDEOLOGICAL METAPHORS AND PRESCRIPTIONS FOR REFORM

Ideological rationalization thus engaged with language at and through an intersection of structural form and indexical usage, producing tension in the then highly charged “metaphoricization” of indexical meanings of forms. The resolution of this tension seems to move the very structural system into new configurations, generally unforeseen by the users of the language.

The contemporary situation with language and gender has many parallels to the previous example. Ideologically informed perception correctly intuits the cultural parallelism between indexicals of speaker gender and status, and turns it into a metaphorical equivalence relationship by literalizing status asymmetry in terms of the *referential category* of gender, through which the *statistical indexicals* of gender are grasped in metalinguistic consciousness. To be sure, pointed Standardization in performance and in attitude is perceived as suggestively effeminate for men, and its opposite as suggestively masculinized for women. But, whatever its aims at dealing with such indexical values, the analysis and prescription for so-called nonsexist language has focused upon categorical reform of the semantico-referential system itself, as a means to reform of what we have seen is an indexical statistical tendency of language usage. Thus, the two basic routes of reform by the ideologically committed and convinced: lexical neutralization of various gender-indicating terms of role identity (e.g., *waiter* vs. *waitress* [feminine] neutralized as *server*), and neutralization of gender-indicating anaphoric pronouns (e.g., *he* vs. *she* [feminine] neutralized as some prescribed form) under certain conditions.

The first reform does not actually deal with the existence of a category of semantic gender as such, but only with some of its overt examples that have explicit, affixal expression of formal GENDER (cf. *-ess*, added or not to the stem *wait(e)r-*), the differential referential interpretation of which is ideologically perceived as irrelevant, or even inimical, to the assertible equality of individuals in this role. Such ideologically charged but merely lexical reform has both a certain potential for misfire and abuse, and a certain generative force reasserting categorical homeostasis. For, the innovating term can be incorporated in language as essentially a substitute for the marked FEMININE term, as for example *chairperson* (vs. older *chairman*), which can be used to indicate ‘female’ as opposed specifically to ‘male’. Or, the innovating term can rapidly replace an older one as the stem for a derivational set, in effect reconstituting the category of GENDER, as for example *serveress*, an encountered nonce formation built on the new, intendedly GENDER-neutral *server*.

The second, pronominal reform attacks the very marking of the category in the grammatical system of the language. It does so through an ideological as-

sault on the differentially referential “truth”-value of the structurally unmarked MASCULINE form *he/him/his* (henceforth, H) in certain anaphoric uses. Thus, note, that *categorical* (not the statistical) presence or absence of a clear, segmentable unit in linguistic usage, because someone uses H or not in these constructions, is turned into an index of a certain absence or presence of ideological solidarity with the reformers. An additional indexical polarity has been created in the language riding on the previous set of functions of the anaphoric or reference-maintenance system. As indicated in Figure 8, in such cases, to the ideologically committed reformers certain uses of H are not only a predictable consequence of the regular anaphoric system (*The student . . . He . . .*), they also refer unavoidably to a notional ‘male’ and differential man, and *thereby* index the speaker as not solidary with the equalitarian ideals (and hence “truth” in this normative sense) of the reform group. And in pragmatics, as we have seen with the T/Y distinction, there is no asymmetry of markedness that allows any user of the language to escape being susceptible to ideological location by an interested interlocutor.

But what is proposed as the alternative, solidarity-indexing form? Here, native speakers find themselves in something of a dilemma, from which the structural route out has not yet solidified as a categorical norm. Clearly, given the structural asymmetries of English grammatical categories, differentially referential truth-in-anaphoric-equality emerges as a problem. It emerges from the fact that SINGULAR MASCULINE category has been one of the basic means of indicating indefiniteness of information in a nominal construction communicating about a notional ‘human’ (see Table 2 and Figure 2). Thus the well-known *Man is mortal, but he . . .* which logicians quantify universally over humanity. So when, intending neutralization of GENDER, we use a lexical item, word, or standardized expression in the SINGULAR, or more specifically in the notional ‘non-plural’, how can we maintain reference to the introduced topic—given our particular linguistic categories—in the face of the added indexical baggage of the H form? A great number of different solutions have been proposed and illustrated. These range from neological and channel-specific *s/he* anaphor, useful only for writing; to the referential nicety of the logician’s disjunctive anaphor *he or she*; to the time-sequence alternation of *he* with *she* as construction demands an anaphor, which requires a realtime self-monitoring

$$\text{“H”} = \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{anaphorizes (indexes) antecedent noun} \\ \text{phrase;} \\ \text{refers to notional male, differential man;} \\ \text{indexes that speaker is without raised} \\ \text{consciousness (or with hostility), etc.} \end{array} \right.$$

**Figure 8.** Indexical and referential values of Modern English anaphora *He/Him/His* for ideologically committed group.

capacity beyond most and possibly all of us; to the blanket reversal of the markedness of GENDER by using *she* as both GENDER neutralized and notionally 'female' category; to the blanket reversal of NUMBER markedness for notional 'human' topics by using PLURAL nominals only for indefinites; through capitalizing upon the existence of indefinite *they* in colloquial usage.

The possibility of a structural norm compatible with so-called nonsexist usage is interesting. For as an engagement of ideologically informed usage with the language system, the discovery or diagnosis of the purported structural ailment—accomplished by literalizing a metaphor from categories of reference to categories of indexicals—is really a process of unambiguous creation of—or infectious inoculation with—the pragmatic disease. Such discovery/creation is a political process par excellence, in which language as it is available to its users' consciousness is the medium of practical struggle in now categorical indexical terms. This will clearly have repercussions on the nature of the structural norms of the semantico-referential system, but how is a complicated matter. We can see some of the complications by looking at perhaps the "best" nonsexist indexical, the last enumerated—best for the structural norm because it has already penetrated colloquial anaphoric usage and seems least to violate the universal constraints on systems.

Many languages have a categorially THIRD PLURAL pronominal form that is used for indefinite—that is, further unspecified—introduction of a 'human' or at least 'volitional' topic of discourse, generally in transitive or active subject position. Thus, in English, the paranoid's "*They* are out to get me!" Colloquial English for some time has shown the spread of similar categorial forms to non-subject positions of reference maintenance (anaphora), especially possessive modifier of plural nominals, starting from the analogical point of entry with INDEFINITE subjects *everyone*, *everybody*, *every* [Noun], in which a differentially referential plurality is suggested by the modifier *every-*. Thus, *Everyone put on their scarves*, or even . . . *scarf*—which is perfectly acceptable colloquial usage, perhaps even Standard for many English speakers. From *every-* indefinites, the usage has spread to others, for example with *any-*, *some-*, emphasizing the indefiniteness of notionally 'human' or 'animate' reference more than the notion of 'plurality'. At this point, it is clear, *they/their* (and for some people *them*) has joined the SECOND PERSON *you/your* as a generalizing indefinite form, as witness in the transition from one to the other in the following passage from a user's bulletin that switches from report mode to directive by the shift of PERSON at the categorial level: "Once this feature was removed, the data disconnections stopped. Unfortunately, this means that *everyone* must make sure either to depress *their* data buttons or to turn off *your* terminal to make sure *your* connection is severed" (*Tele-Data* [University of Chicago], vol. 2, no. 5 [Dec., 1982], p. 4; italics added). Given the indefiniteness of the clause subject *everyone*, intended apparently to include writer, addressees, and any

others in the local community of computer users, and given that the possessive modifiers do little more than specify ownership/location that can be presupposed, the writer might well have come up with: “. . .that everyone must make sure either to depress *the* data buttons or to turn off *the* terminal to make sure *the* connection is severed.”

It is obvious, then, that THIRD PLURAL anaphors occur as grammatically dictated forms for reference maintenance where the specificity of categorial content is low, indeed, sometimes being nothing further than that of a definite article. And it is clear that the uses of H, the sexist anaphor, give maximally foregrounded offense to the ideologically committed precisely in such cases. Hence, these have been the foci for reform, *not* those cases where notions of ‘male’ and ‘female’ are definitely introduced in the antecedent nominal expression. Few would seem to propose *The woman put on their coat*, or even *A woman put on their coat* as a corrective to H; for recall that the attack has been grounded in a doctrine of presumptive masculinity in otherwise notionally ‘human’ topics of discourse. Hence, it does not seem to be the categorial obligatoriness of anaphoric agreement *tout court* that is at issue, though obviously one extreme and unworkable solution to the indexical offense of using H is to eliminate overt anaphoric reference maintenance. Rather, recalling Figure 2, we see that in structural terms, the problem is tantamount to using the machinery of the indefinite agent *they* and generic anaphor *their/[them]* to express a *new and distinct overt category*, ANIMATE SINGULAR, to which anaphoric reference maintenance is ideologically prescribed, whether ‘definite’ or ‘indefinite’, whether ‘specific and distributive’ or ‘generic’. The traditional system, with markedness asymmetries of (marked) PLURAL and (marked) FEMININE, uses H to achieve this. The proposed *they/their/them* anaphor for ‘gender’-indefinite reference maintenance in effect attempts to override this, so that the overt form *they/their/them* would now have several distinct areas of usage, seen by category, with neutralizations forming a patchwork structure of explicit distinctions otherwise unattested in such reference-maintenance systems. TH, as we might relabel the prescribed index, would now be categorially sometimes specifically PLURAL, sometimes specifically ANIMATE SINGULAR, sometimes specifically INDEFINITE (AGENTIVE), in the face of its usual markedness position—a “local” morphological solution that quickly leads to “global” discourse confusion in complicated reference tracking.

We could examine various other proposals as well to see what effects they seem to have on the numerous semantically and pragmatically relevant functions of English language forms. Those attempting to devise so-called nonsexist discourse forms generally eliminate the maximally offensive H, only to find that this requires a number of readjustments of varying structural severity in order that, within a particular ongoing discourse context, they can keep definiteness distinct from indefiniteness, singular from plural, parties of first from those of

the second from those of the . . . nth parts (all categorial THIRD PERSONS), and so forth. It is easier to proscribe H by declaring indexical offense than to prescribe a structurally stable solution to the entailed disruption. For multiple syntactic systems are at issue once the H form is no longer a possible category of neutralization. The case of H/TH or H/??? is not as simple in alternatives as the case of T/Y, because the former are of much greater structural centrality and functional ubiquity. And any stability reached will involve more profound effects on the structural norms of English.

What is common to the two cases, however, is that an ideology focuses upon a particular, structurally dictated indexical usage, finding it wanting as a vehicle of the ideology, and entailing a charged indexical contrast with some alternative, structurally dictated usage. These examples, like any others we might have chosen, show the fact of what Saussure (1960[1916]:30f.) called *parole*—and what contemporaneously we call “performance” (cf. Chomsky 1965:4)—is really a complex and bidirectional relationship played out in micro-realtime.

To different degrees, any linguistic *form*, a pragmatic realization of structure in use, has multiple indexical values for its users, whether or not these are explicitly recognized in conscious awareness (cf. Silverstein 1982). Most are not. But it is as analogues or metaphors of structure reconstructively seen through the *differential reference* value of use that indexical values more generally come to consciousness and inform interested ideologies of how language is and ought to be. In a sense, then, structure, though a theoretical abstraction, “determines” presupposable use-value, because in interpretation there is a tendency to project a prior structurally determined use-value (differentially referential structure) as at the basis—logically and/or temporally—of the apprehended, that is, imputed, analogues and metaphors of usage. The “truth” of indexicals is one such.

But contrariwise, any linguistic form in use is also an action, with consequences or entailments for its users of which it is a prospective index. In implementation, there is a requirement for a metalinguistic consciousness of how such entailments are and ought to be accomplished, a consciousness that has its own linguistic externalization possible to different degrees. The degree to which such metalevel consciousness grasps indexical entailments, and to which such linguistic externalizations of consciousness are inseparable from the forms in use, determine the way a structural system of functionally semantico-referential value can be abstracted from the fact of conscious usage. Structural categories, then, are prospectively determined by the interaction of consciousness, frequently ideologically informed consciousness, with entailing use-value. In a sense, then, structure, though a theoretical abstraction, “is determined by” entailing use-value, to the extent that structural categories are precipitated by constancies of consciously informed entailments in the social action of language use.

And whether in micro–realtime, called synchrony, or, as we have here emphasized, in macro–realtime, called diachrony, such a bidirectional dialectic constitutes the minimalest total linguistic fact.

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