Abstract

In this paper, Conceptual Metaphor Theory and cognitive linguistic theories of metonymy and frame semantics are used to explore metaphors for the self in an analysis of Japanese grammar and lexicon. The analysis takes an embodied cognition stance on language-independent phenomena that happen to have (but are not isolated to) surface linguistic indexes. In so doing, this work aims to shed light on the ubiquity of what is hypothesized to be a universal set of primary conceptual metaphors surrounding the conceptualization of the self, and does so by analysis of one array of these linguistic manifestations in one particular language, Japanese. We hope that this analysis will shed light on the actual metaphors driving language change and language use, leading to a questioning of meta-analytic metaphors introduced by the anthropological narrative on the nature of ‘Japaneseness’. We specifically target the wrapping metaphor that has become ubiquitous in discourses about Japanese culture, society, and language. It is shown that the wrapping metaphor is not perennial to the Japanese language, and instead a true analysis of metaphors for self-conceptualization are proposed that are reflective of actual frame and metaphor patterns.

1 Introduction

The current work represents an exploration into the cognitive foundations of Japanese representations of the self based on evidence from the semantic domain of selfhood. Specifically, we aim to challenge existing views of how the self is constructed and conceptualized in Japanese speaker’s minds, and in society at large, as posited in current anthropological theories, while also bringing a distinctively cognitive perspective to the issue. We hope that, by bringing an empirically-rich cognitive linguistic account to the study of the conceptualization of the self, anthropological and sociological theory may be benefitted as well, such that future theories in these disciplines come to be more consonant with findings from cognitive linguistics and neuropsychology.

The task at hand is to consolidate discussions of self and social structure within the fields of anthropology and sociology with significant findings from cognitive linguistics, specifically from Conceptual Metaphor Theory and frame semantics as applied to the study of grammatical constructions. In positing that conceptualizations of the self are nothing more than extensions of universally-common primary metaphors, Lakoff (1996) and Lakoff & Johnson (1999) have made
a powerful prediction: cross-linguistically and cross-culturally, conceptualizations of the self have in common a universal fundamental subject-self metaphor, regardless of surface linguistic differences. These are shared and uniform across languages simply because the metaphors underlying these conceptualizations are all grounded in a common human embodied experience and in the resulting embodied language. These findings have found empirical experimental support from the fields of cognitive psychology and neuropsychology (Damasio 2012). The theoretical framework posited in these works is remarkably potent in accounting for diverse specific language phenomena, and effective in revealing coherent and predictable cross-linguistic traits.

The current work joins several similar existing efforts in the field by taking as its aim the enrichment of anthropological theory with findings from linguistics. Hirose (2006), for example, challenges the common assumption that Japanese society is more collectivist than, for instance, American society, and demonstrates with evidence from language that the collectivist model is incompatible with what seems to be an individualist construction of the self. It is in this same spirit of using linguistic evidence to help shape the building of cultural models that we offer the current study. Namely, our work questions a particular metaphor used in anthropology to characterize the self - the wrapping metaphor - pointing out its limited scope of applicability, and suggests other metaphors we should be focusing on for a more accurate understanding of local perspectives. This metaphor is most notably shaped and advanced in the work of Hendry (1989, 1990, 1993), and has spread to other domains in the social sciences as a commonly-used metaphor to discuss Japanese cultural ideology.

In revealing the metaphors that are used in actuality, we can also understand what metaphors led to the wrapping metaphor in the first place in the mind of the cultural observer. We will show that the wrapping metaphor is not a metaphor inherent in the Japanese language, and hence in the semantic and cultural repositories of Japanese, but is a metaphor externally imposed by the observer in order to create a coherent and appealing anthropological narrative about Japanese. While on one hand the wrapping metaphor will be shown not to be present in the conceptual system, on the other hand metaphors that are indeed present will be detailed and illustrated with linguistic examples. In this way, the current work takes both an analytic and a meta-analytic tack on the study of metaphors in the case of Japanese.

2 The Metaphoric Conceptualization of the Self

According to Conceptual Metaphor Theory, metaphor is defined as a systematic mapping between two different conceptual domains in an asymmetric manner (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Metaphors are not rare poetic quirks of language, but constitute the majority of conceptual, and consequently, of linguistic structure. A common example of conceptual metaphor is the LOVE IS A JOURNEY metaphor system. This metaphor system is common to and responsible for all of the following linguistic manifestations of this metaphor system: Where is this relationship going? We were in a solid relationship, but at some point we veered off course. Our relationship is on the rocks. We’re heading in different directions. The words in italics in the above sentences are words that evoke the source domain of the metaphor. That is, they evoke the concrete or physical domain of travel, or of motion forward. The target, (or abstract) domain of love is conceptualized in terms of the source (or concrete) domain of travel. In this conceptualization, the lovers are seen as travelers, the relationship is seen as a vehicle, the course of the relationship
is the path of travel, and the goals of the relationship are the destination of travel. When producing and understanding language, cognizers do not stop to think about this mapping, and do not perform any additional mental operation to produce or to understand an utterance. Rather, the metaphor is wired at a deep neural level, and the metaphor is activated automatically and subconsciously.

The above example only gives a small glimpse into the immense world of the metaphor network of LOVE IS A JOURNEY. The example sentences given are only a few conventional expressions associated with this metaphor. However, the metaphor operates at a sub-linguistic level, and it is so powerful as to be able to generate ever-new linguistic forms of expressions that reveal the metaphor. As any number of contemporary love songs show, it is possible to talk about love as a journey in any number of novel ways: as being in the fast lane of a highway, as crashing while going too fast, or even driving off a cliff. Regardless of how creative or innovative the linguistic metaphors are, they continue to be understood by speakers of English without any problem; this is because the underlying conceptual metaphor system is in place, with all the cross-frame mappings existing at very high levels, such that any new instances of specific frame mappings draw from the high level ones. The inferences generated on the basis of the logical and frame structure in the source domain faithfully map to the target domain.

Conceptual metaphor theory has been applied to the study of all facets of semantic conceptualization, from the very mundane to the highly specialized, and has permeated a wide array of scholarly disciplines, including psychology, linguistics, literary studies, cultural studies, political studies and law. As this body of work makes clear, it turns out that conceptual metaphors pervade our everyday language and actions, as well as every form of decision-making. For instance, the domain of human communication, or conceiving how one puts across and decodes spoken, written or signed messages, almost cannot be conceptualized at all without metaphor. We speak about giving and taking ideas, getting through to someone, sending a message, receiving someone’s meaning, grasping an idea, showing someone what we mean, and transmitting information. The words in italics evoke the source (concrete) domain of object manipulation and object exchange: transferring objects (giving, getting, transmitting), holding and manipulating objects (grasping, turning over, tossing around), and directing others’ attention towards an object (showing, revealing). The act of communicating is conceptualized as the exchange of objects, which in the realm of communication are ideas, thoughts, or information. Sometimes words are revealing in their historical metaphorical underpinnings in the way the word has lexicalized. For instance, transmit includes the Latin prefix trans-, meaning ‘across’ and suffix -mittere, meaning ‘to send.’ Today, we only use transmit to refer to communication (not to sending objects), but we can see in the etymological roots of the word that its meaning was originally ‘send across.’ Metaphors pertaining to communication are part of a bigger metaphor family called the Mind metaphors. These metaphors structure how we conceive of abstract mind-internal and often self-reflective activities such as thinking, believing, understanding, theorizing, learning, communicating, empathizing, etc.

Similarly, what are called the event structure metaphor systems account for most common conceptualizations of time, events, actions, and goals. These four domains are abstract domains, and we are able to talk about them by virtue of our experience with the more concrete and tangible domains that shape their conceptualization. The tangible domains fall into two categories: motion and object manipulation. Thus, the event structure metaphor system is divided into two: the location event structure metaphors and the object event structure metaphors. This
division constitutes a commonly accepted cognitive duality, which is that human beings experience the world in two ways, and alternate between these two forms of conceptualization, sometimes even within the same discourse. In location event structure domains, cognizers focus on themselves as movers through space: starting at a location, moving forward, changing direction, slowing down, stopping, etc. In the object event structure domains, cognizers focus on themselves as static entities that manipulate objects, receive objects, give or deliver objects, encounter objects, are encumbered by objects, are enabled by objects, etc. These domains arise out of basic experience in early childhood development and during first language acquisition.

This duality between location and object event structure underlies all mind and all event structure metaphors, among many others. They provide, for all of these abstract domains, a dual concrete domain: one part focusing on motion through space, and the other focusing on interaction with objects. The metaphors used to structure the abstract domain of self-conceptualization are no different. Mental projections of the self are deeply rooted in the dual event structure metaphors, to the extent that it is often difficult to conceive of the self without making use of these metaphors.

The domain of self-conceptualization is further structured by the domain of physical interaction, and an individual is thought of as consisting of a Subject and a Self. The Subject is the metaphorical locus of consciousness, and is structured by folk conceptions of ‘essences’: that is, we all have an ‘essence’ that makes us who we are, and gives us our morality, our self-identity, and our continuity as a conscious individual. The Self, on the other hand, is the parts of a person that are not the Subject, and includes everything from one’s physical body, to one’s social persona and personal history. The Subject and the Self are entities metaphorically, and they metaphorically have a relationship to each other:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target (abstract) domain</th>
<th>Source (concrete) domain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject-Self relationship</td>
<td>is</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| is                       | a person                |
| is                       | a person                |
| is                       | a person-to-person relationship |

The roles in the right column above denote physical entities and physical relationships amongst those entities, while the roles to which they map in the left column denote abstract entities and abstract relationships amongst those entities. The fact that the abstract domain of self-conception is structured in terms of physical interactions amongst actual people shows that even the most basic understanding of self requires a split-self metaphor, which comes about because the source domain lends its structure to the conceptualization of the target abstract domain. This theory predicts that we understand how we think of and relate to ourselves completely on the basis of how we think of and relate to other people and entities in the world.

This mapping is thought to exist on a deep cognitive level, and does not represent simply a surface linguistic expression. Moreover, language acts as a window onto underlying conceptual structures; the overwhelming linguistic evidence observed in typologically disparate and genetically unrelated languages leads to the conjecture that these metaphorical mappings are indeed somehow fundamental to the human experience, rather than mere linguistic coincidences. In that spirit, let’s look at some linguistic evidence for this metaphoric conceptualization of the self, with examples from English and Japanese:
In example (1), we see two examples of the Subject-Self relationship at work. In (1a), the Subject-Self relationship is conceptualized as a physical spatial relationship between one person and another. In (1b), the Subject is a coercing entity that exerts control over the Self, making the Self continue studying. In both cases, I grammatically encodes the metaphoric Subject, the seat of consciousness and the judge of best action, while the Self, encoded as a direct object of the predicate, is the static or coerced entity that is defined relative to the Subject.1 Similarly, in the Japanese example in (2), the self is seen as a controllable entity that the Subject has lost control over.

This subject-self relationship emerges in many forms of expression, both in English and Japanese. More importantly, these expressions reveal the inferential structure inherent in the source domain of the metaphor, a structure that maps to the target domain and leads to our folk understanding of self.

3 Conceptual Metaphor and Anthropological Theory in Japanese Studies

The purpose of the current work purposely goes somewhat against the quintessence of social scientific work pertaining to the nature of Japanese culture in society over the past seven decades or so. Here, with respect to linguistic metaphors resulting from deeper conceptual metaphors, we seek points of similarity between Japanese and other cultural semantic systems. Put differently, we seek a common scientific explanation for behavioral and cognitive phenomena across cultures, Japan included. This constitutes a more organic explanation of cognitive phenomena, rather focusing on cultural idiosyncrasies, and stands in contrast with a more widespread framing of Japan as unique or distinctive, as is common in contemporary comparative approaches between Japan’s language(s) and culture(s) and those of another cultural or national entity (e.g., as those critiqued in Dale (1986)). The theoretical and methodological underpinnings underlying the current work are markedly grounded in cognitive linguistic and cognitive psychological theories, and as such the goal is to further understanding of the general human capacity for thought, rather than to extol, critique, or otherwise put the spotlight on one particular social, national, cultural or linguistic group.

Having said that, the value of singling out Japanese for this purpose lies in the typological and genetic diversity that Japanese offers to the cross-linguistic study of metaphor, and certainly the empirical observations made in this study would be valuable to linguists and anthropologists alike. It follows that a lot of observations made about Japanese language and culture, ones that are routinely claimed to be unique or even bizarre, can be explained away by pointing out the common embodied underpinnings of those conceptualizations, which are shared by all human beings of whatever cultural persuasion, but which have different surface manifestations, (where

---

1 Throughout, Subject with a capital ‘S’ will refer to the metaphoric seat of consciousness, while subject with a lower case ‘s’ will refer to the grammatical category of subject.
‘surface’ refers to overt linguistics forms and overt customs). The latter are indeed unique and distinctive, but here we point to the value of underscoring the common cognitive foundation shared by various meaning systems.

A second goal is to point out the extent to which the Western philosophical tradition grounded in Cartesian philosophy may have influenced the framing of essentially metaphorically-grounded conceptualization patterns in East Asian cultural studies, and specifically Japanese studies. As Slingerland (2004) has aptly put it, “philosophical theories concerning such abstract concepts as ‘the self’ are parasitic on previously existing folk theories of the self, which in turn arise out of conceptual metaphorical structures built into colloquial language (p. 232).” We cannot deny that the theoretical and methodological toolkit with which we come to the table as social scientists is the end result of a long intellectual history, at the same time a virtue and a curse. However, especially now in an era of increasing conviviality between empirical and theoretical scientific fields, and between neurocognitive psychology and the social sciences, we must take the responsibility of challenging our own intellectual assumptions and reflect on old data in a new light. The canon of anthropological and sociological works on Japan, done by Western and Japanese scholars alike, is shaped by a set of meta-metaphors (metaphors constructed by anthropologists and sociologists to describe and explain observations surrounding rites, customs, observances, and language use in the group in which fieldwork is carried out), which are themselves revealing. Thus, we must take the responsibility of recognizing the meta-metaphors, and deconstructing them, as well as seeking the true metaphors used locally by the studied population.

The goal of the current work is two-pronged, possessing both a linguistic empirical component and a metatheoretic anthropological component. The hope is that in pointing out how the Japanese language reveals underlyingly common metaphors for the self, we can both reinforce the neural theory of language, a theory that confidently makes claims about linguistic universals (grounded in a common embodied experience, primary metaphors, and image schemas), and find a place for Japanese language data to be of use in this endeavor. After all, what is more primary or universal than a sense of self? It is needed as a starting point for all other embodied experience, and makes possible the distinction between oneself and non-self others, as well as one’s own space and the space in the world outside. Thus, this work will show a) what types of metaphors are not present in Japanese (and explain why these false metaphors have arisen in anthropological discourses of Japan), and b) what types of metaphors are indeed present in Japanese. Further, we will see why focusing on the types of metaphors that do in fact exist in Japanese is a worthwhile undertaking.

4 The Wrapping Metaphor

In the 1980s and 1990s, a wave of anthropological literature came to dominate discourses on ‘Japaneseness’, and some of it centered on the idea of Japanese language and cultural practices as mechanisms for ‘wrapping’ (Hendry 1989, Ben-Ari et al. 1990). Obviously this was intended as an anthropological metaphor, to aid in capturing and uniting multiple coherent observations from different facets of socio-cultural life. However, a point of confusion arises because the metaphor was designed to account for both abstract and physical instances of wrapping practices (the latter constituting such things as gift-wrapping, for instance). This leads one to wonder to
what extent the physical domain was over-extended into the abstract domain, without justification that does not rely on mere analogy or impressionistic similarity.

There was also a surge in interest in the concepts of *uchi* and *soto*, the Japanese concepts for ‘inside’ and ‘outside’, meant both physically and metaphorically (Bachnik & Quinn 1994, Wetzel 1994). These works lay the foundation for the anthropological of Japanese society and language for the next few decades, both inside Japan and abroad. *Uchi* and *soto*, both native terms with complex native understandings, came to be accepted as the default dichotomy by which Japanese people define the relation of self to other, and the relation of Japanese to non-Japanese. The data came to reinforce the dichotomy, rather than the dichotomy being adjusted to accommodate new data.

These meta-metaphorical framings were pursued at the expense of an in-depth examination of actual metaphors occurring in Japanese language and arising in cultural practices and artefacts. This happened, undoubtedly, due to the lack of awareness of the importance and ubiquity of universally-available structured metaphor networks, and due to the lack of empirical work done in this domain up to that point. Their importance is only now coming to the forefront of cognitive sciences and linguistics in the last decade. It is well known that anthropologists must rely on their own metaphors to relay important and otherwise indecipherable cultural observations to the rest of the scientific community; however, these anthropologist-constructed metaphors were taken as emic, and attributed to the meaning systems of the people observed, rather than rightly taken as etic, a construct of the observer’s own narrative about the observed entity. In light of this, the current work aims to point out what those etic descriptions are, and to articulate them in terms of the emic semiotic and semantic structures underpinning them.

As one of the many products of the anthropology of Japan of the 1980s, the wrapping metaphor is used to explain Japanese social, economic and linguistic practices. To understand how the wrapping metaphor may be built to apply to such abstract concepts (which all three are), we must first take apart the source domain of the wrapping metaphor.

The physical experience of wrapping involves an agent applying a (pliant) object around another object, whereby the covering object makes contact with the covered object, and the covering object touches the covered object all the way around its exterior surface. Being wrapped, the object is safe from contact from other external objects and forces. The wrapping object creates a barrier between the wrapped object and the rest of the world. Wrapping, thus, is usually construed as an intentional activity, with the intended purpose of protecting the wrapped object (rather than as providing contents for the wrapping). As Sweetser (2001, 2004) has observed, containment necessarily involves protection, both of the contained object from the outside world, and in some cases of the outside world from the contained object. Thus, we suddenly see an important set of inferences arising out of the wrapping source domain: we wrap valuable things in order to protect them, in order to hide them from an external viewer, and in order to protect the external viewer from the object. All of these inferences are used to understand large-scale social, economic and interpersonal realms.

Describing language as a form of wrapping taps into a very common metaphor, one that has to date been found in every language in which linguists have looked for it. This is the THINKING IS OBJECT MANIPULATION metaphor, with a metaphoric subcase of IDEAS ARE OBJECTS, which is also used in the Conduit metaphor system (Reddy 1979, Sweetser 1991). There is no known language for which this metaphor, either in part or in whole, does not
have linguistic equivalents or non-linguistic behavioral and gestural manifestations. This metaphor is also a common meta-metaphor used in linguistics itself, such as when linguists talk about words ‘containing’ their meaning.

The wrapping metaphor also assumes a version of the theory of essences, such that the essential part of some entity is that which is located at its most central point. There is a version of the abstract self which is the ‘essential self’, and this is the self that is protected by being wrapped. Once wrapped, it is now at the center, and adding more wrapping makes the core self all the more essential by virtue of being the one true unique core of that whole (wrapped) object.

Thus, combining the inferences of the source domain of wrapping with a culture-specific account of essences, as well as with some universal high-level metaphors that underlie language processing in general, we start to see how the wrapping metaphor comes to be used meta-metaphorically for any facet of cultural and linguistic life. In the communicative domain, the message is the ‘essence’ that lies at the core of its container, which wraps it. The communicator is the recipient of the ‘wrapped’ message, and the communicatee is the recipient of this message. In the social and interpersonal domains, the essential self is the core of person, which is then ‘wrapped’ by social conventions, norms, politeness, face-saving behavior and ritualistic practices to protect and hide the essential-self-core from the world, (as well as to protect the world from the self).

When put in these terms, as we will see later, the Japanese language is no more a type of wrapping than the English language; that is, it is not conceptualized as wrapping as a matter of systematic metaphor in the language used by the local language users to talk about their own conceptualizations of self and other, as well as of social and linguistic interaction. Rather, it is a series of universally-present primary metaphors for the self, folk beliefs about essences, and other primary metaphors pertaining to the communicative and behavioral domains that inadvertently seed the observer’s analysis of the studied culture and prompt him or her to frame the discourse about the studied peoples in ways familiar to the observer and to the observer’s audience. We must distinguish metaphors used to talk about a studied people from metaphors inherent in the minds and linguistic systems of those studied people.

5 Expressing the Japanese self

Although we insist that metaphor is a cognitive reality and not solely a linguistic one, a purely linguistic focus of metaphor analysis seems to continue to be sustained in the literature at large. This is the result of language consistently and cross-linguistically bringing to the linguistic surface the same interconnected metaphor mappings and relations, regardless of the region or time in which the linguistic empirical observation is made. For this reason, language is the principal source of data to support the existence of a given metaphor (although much experimental work on non- or pre-linguistic metaphors has flourished in recent decades). Consequently, one unfortunate outcome is that often the absence of direct linguistic evidence is taken as the absence of the phenomenon. Similarly, a misdiagnosis of commonalities across linguistic metaphors (whether by judging them too similar or too different) results in under- and over-estimation of the extent of certain underlying conceptual metaphors. In the current work, we take a binary empirical-theoretical approach to metaphor analysis. That is, we start off with assumptions that universal patterns exist, yet we seek empirical support for those patterns, which we then use to modify the theory. However, should we find an absence of empirical support for a
particular phenomenon, we will not abandon the theoretical assumptions; rather, we will assume that absence of proof does not constitute proof of absence, and press forward with further empirical investigations in ever-broader domains.

As pertains to this approach specifically applied to the study of metaphor in Japanese, and even more specifically to the study of self metaphors in Japanese, we must detail a few works that have explored the linguistic evidence for self metaphors. The subject-self metaphors were formally introduced by Lakoff & Becker (1992) and Lakoff (1999). In Lakoff (1996, 1999), Hirose also contributed data from Japanese to illustrate the applicability of the subject-self metaphors to unrelated languages, after which Hirose went on to do some work on the linguistic evidence for self-conceptualization in Japanese (2000, 2006) as well as did Hasegawa & Hirose (2005). A few additional works can be found on the metaphoric nature of honorifics (Hiraga 1999), and other non-honorific common expressions (McVeigh 1996). Short of these excellent contributions to the field, there is not much work done in this domain, and a large gap exists not only in Japanese metaphor studies, but in cross-linguistic metaphor studies as well.

In the current work, I focus specifically on self metaphors, and those which help us understand the framing of the self, since the wrapping metaphor crucially rests on an assumed folk theory of essences. We assume that the subject-self metaphor system fully exists in Japanese, much as has been shown for English. The same sets of mappings arise in Japanese expressions and grammatical structures. Nevertheless, while the subject-self metaphor is equally present, the conventional frequency with which some of the metaphoric sub-mappings arise in Japanese rather than in English is different: less for some, and more for others. Further, a separate and additional set of metaphor applies, imposed from other areas of the language, that in turn also structure the way lexically-activated metaphors are processed. These additional metaphors seep in from the grammar itself, as well as from more global metaphors that structure speech act performance and intersubjective interactions.

Finally, the folk theory of essences is needed, as mentioned above, one which captures folk beliefs about the nature and locus of the essences of entities, and by extension, of the self. Most folk theories (that is, conventional non-scientific beliefs and explanatory models held by language users about what it means to ‘be’) regarding essences can be explained in terms of at least two parameters: a) the essential portion of an object is assumed to be the most central region of that object (e.g., core curriculum, innermost self), and b) the essential is the most prototypical representation of that entity, or the representation carrying the highest cue validity leading to the categorization of that entity. It is due to observers holding a folk belief based solely on (a) that the spread of the wrapping metaphor in Japanese meta-discourse has taken place. However, in local folk terms, both (a) and (b) are present in characterizing the nature of self, and this should lead to more complex meaning networks than the researcher can even imagine.

The subject-self metaphor is indeed present in Japanese. However, the conventional frequency with which subject-self interactions are represented overtly in clausal structure is not as high as it is in English. In Lakoff (1999), Hirose offers a few examples from Japanese to illustrate that the same metaphors apply in both languages. These are:
The SELF-AS-SERVANT METAPHOR

(3) Kare-wa hito-ni sinsetuni-suru younī zibun-ni iikikase-ta.
he-TOP people-DAT kind-do COMP self-DAT tell-PAST
‘He told himself to be kind to people.’

The SPLIT-SELF METAPHOR

(4) Kare-wa mono-o kaku koto-ni zibun/hontou-no zibun-o miidasi-ta.
he-TOP thing-ACC write act of-in self/actual self-ACC find-PST
‘He found himself/his true self in writing.’

These are perfectly good instances of Japanese expressions of these subject-self metaphors. In (3), zibun is the self that is told what to do, and kare is the subject telling zibun what to do, thus establishing a master-servant relationship between subject and self. In (4), a distinction is made between the locus the current perspective from kare’s perspective and the locus of the true perspective, that of hontou-no zibun. As Hirose (2002) has shown, zibun has far-reaching applicability and a polysemy all its own; thus, it is difficult to extrapolate the subject-self metaphor system solely by noticing an instance of zibun. For that reason, we need to look elsewhere in the language for empirical justification for the self metaphor system. We also need to look at more elaborate contextually-embedded structures, rather than single sentential occurrences.

Upon observing similarities in the expression of subject-self metaphors in English and Japanese, the real question is, are these linguistic metaphors likely to occur naturally in Japanese speech to put across the same idea? That is, without being prompted to translate from English, would a Japanese speaker independently express the same ideas in the same ways? This takes as a starting point the underlying metaphor, and asks whether the surface linguistic manifestation is likely to occur in the same way in two languages. On the other hand, starting with similar surface structures, can we be sure they refer back to the same metaphors? In short, how do actual speaker frame their own conceptualizations, without being prompted to reply in a particular format or pre-determined linguistic template? More importantly, once we do get genuine forms of unprompted expression from native speakers, what do those surface forms reveal about the underlying deep metaphor system? It is these types of questions we need to keep in mind when probing languages for hypothesized universal or potentially-universal metaphors, and only corpus analyses of naturally-occurring (rather than researcher-translated) data can provide satisfactory evidence.

6 Looking to the language: Expressing selfhood through the grammar

6.1 Metaphoric perspective-embedding with donatory verbs

Donatory verbs in Japanese (give, receive, etc.) are studied abundantly in Japanese linguistics and sociolinguistics, with much emphasis on the deictic and social deictic aspects of use of such verbs. The intricate rules governing the ordering and use of donatory verbs, and the honorific forms that must be correctly chosen in specific contexts has been taken as evidence for the applicability of the wrapping metaphor in the language itself. However, as we will show in this section, the wrapping metaphor does not emerge at the level of these grammatical and lexical constructions themselves, but arises meta-theoretically from the perspective of the researcher.
That is, wrapping does not act as a source domain frame for any of the metaphors used in these constructions, (and in fact there are plenty of other metaphors used indeed).

The donatory verbs in question are the verbs of giving *kureru*, *kudasaru*, *yaru*, *ageru* and *sasiageru*, as well as the verbs of receiving *morau* and *itadaku*. These verbs appear in verb-verb compounds as the second verb, where the first verb is the lexical verb expressing the lexical meaning of the core action of the predicate:

(5)  *Denwa bango o osie-te kuremasu ka.*


\[\text{telephone number} \quad \text{ACC} \quad \text{tell-CONJ} \quad \text{give.POL} \quad \text{Q}\]

‘Will you please tell me your phone number?’

In this sentence, the speaker (S) is asking the addressee (H) to provide S with information, in which case the speaker would be the information receiver. In this scenario, there is no physical transfer of any tangible object; nevertheless, the verb *kureru* ‘to give’ is still used as part of the verbal compound, capturing the metaphoric meaning that the speaker is the ‘recipient’ of information, and the addressee is the ‘giver’ of information. Simultaneously, the speaker is the ‘recipient’ of the favor (of making such information available), and the addressee is the fullfiller of that favor. These meanings can be captured by two metaphors:

**The Speech Act Object Event Structure Metaphor:**

PROVIDING A BENEFICIAL ACTION IS GIVING AN OBJECT

Benefitting_person --- Recipient_of_object

Benefit_bestower --- Giver_of_object

Favor --- Object

**The Conduit Object Event Structure Metaphor:**

PROVIDING INFORMATION IS GIVING AN OBJECT

Informed_person --- Recipient_of_object

Informing_person --- Giver_of_object

Information --- Object

In the \(V_1-V_2\) compound verb *osiete-kureru*, \(V_1\) captures the target domain of the metaphors (*osieru* ‘to inform’), while \(V_2\) captures the source domain of the metaphors (*kureru* ‘to give’), and both metaphors are processed simultaneously. The reason we understand the action of informing or telling as a ‘giving’ action is due to the inferences that are generated in the source domain which then map over into the target domain. We know that when we give something to someone, that person receives that object; similarly, we know that when we inform someone of something, that person now has that information.

Due to the placement of these verbs, namely on the ‘outside’ of the verbal complex, such expressions are thought to resemble linguistic ‘wrapping’. However, this typological category of

---

\(2\) Note that while some inferences map naturally, others are blocked. For instance, when a giver gives an object, he no longer has that object; however, when an informer informs, he nevertheless still possesses that information. That is because the inferences in the target (communication) domain block this inference; we have experiential and encyclopedic knowledge about what it means to ‘know’, and we know that ‘knowing’ has no bounds on the possession of information.
verb-verb compounds is not unique to Japanese. They can be found in German, Greek, many Indian languages, and essentially is a trait of agglutinative languages where subsequent morphology is added further in the verbal sequence. The wrapping metaphor in this case arises out of a series of primary metaphors that are available cross-linguistically. Note that the expression ‘outside the verbal complex’ is metaphoric. What constitutes ‘outside’ when it comes to a string of meaningful linguistic sounds? Folk theories of meaning are also subject to an understanding of meaning essences, and the lexical verb is often seen as the essential core of the verbal complex, while the inflectional and aspectual morphology is seen as the exterior of that metaphoric object with an essential core. Thus, the lexical verb evokes a metaphoric essential object that, via the Conduit metaphor, is sent along a trajectory to a recipient, and it is ‘wrapped’ in the non-essential morphology, such as the secondary verbs of donatory verb constructions.

Donatory verbs also crucially rely on a theory of essences pertaining to the speaking self, rather than just to the metaphorically-essentialized lexical meaning of the verbs. This is particularly true given the directionality inherent in the verbs. We note that there are two sets of verbs of giving, distinguished by a shift in viewpoint that is also metaphorically shaped. Social status relations are defined in terms of a source domain frame of verticality, where high social status is high on a vertical scale and low social status is low on a vertical scale: SOCIAL STATUS IS A VERTICAL SCALE. Among giving verbs, *kudasaru* (下さる) is the verb used by a speaker to express an act of giving done by a social superior towards the speaker; *kureru*, on the other hand, is a type of giving towards the speaker that is not viewpointed for social status. In both cases, the transfer of the object is towards the speaker. There are several interacting frames in the source domain, and they create a viewpoint clash.

**Diagram 1**  Giving towards self (*kureru, kudasaru*): The frames of Giving, Motion along a path, and Vertical scale, with frame elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frames:</th>
<th>Speech act</th>
<th>Giving</th>
<th>Motion along a path</th>
<th>Vertical scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frame roles:</td>
<td>speaker</td>
<td>giver</td>
<td>source of motion</td>
<td>top position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>addressee</td>
<td>recipient</td>
<td>goal of motion</td>
<td>bottom position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3rd person</td>
<td>thing given</td>
<td>moving trajector</td>
<td>trajector on vertical scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>direction of motion</td>
<td>pole towards which trajector changes position</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Diagram 1 details the relevant frames in understanding *kudasaru*. These frames interact in the source domain of the metaphor SOCIAL STATUS IS A VERTICAL SCALE, specifically in the context of giving. The lines between the frame elements are the bindings among them. Thus, the giver in the giving transaction is simultaneously the source of motion of the thing given, and simultaneously the top position on a vertical scale. The clash lies in the perspectivization of the frames. The Giving frame is inherently perspectivised from the point of view of the giver (that is, actions are expressed relative to the giver’s point of view; contrast that with Receiving, which is perspectivised from the recipient’s position), whereas the verb *kudasaru* takes as its perspective the motion from the top position on the vertical scale down towards the bottom position on the vertical scale, which is bound to the goal of motion, i.e., the recipient. *Kudasaru* is simultaneously expressing two perspectives: that of the giver (in the Giving frame) and that of the recipient (in the directionality encoded in the verb). The directionality is nevertheless viewpointed from self’s (speaker’s) perspective, so motion of actions and of objects is from the
exterior of self towards self. *Kureru* also encodes the directionality toward self, but there is no mapping to a Vertical scale frame. Thus, *kudasaru* is a more complex source domain than *kureru*, which is neutral as to vertical positioning.

On the other hand there are the verbs of giving that express giving away from self, to others: *ageru* (あげる) and *sasiageru* (差し上げる). These are both shaped by the vertical frame, as demonstrated in the semantics encoded in the kanji character (and in the fact that *ageru* can also be used to mean ‘raise’). But for both of these, as opposed to *kureru* and *kudasaru*, there is a directional movement of the giving away from the self. For *sasiageru*, there is a frame clash brought about elsewhere in the frame binding network. In this case the speaker is the giver, as well as being the source of motion; however, the speaker is placed lower on the vertical scale and the direction of motion is upward, as illustrated in Diagram 2:

**Diagram 2** Giving away from self (*ageru, sasiageru*): The frames of Giving, Motion along a path, and Vertical scale, with frame elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frames:</th>
<th>Speech act</th>
<th>Giving</th>
<th>Motion along a path</th>
<th>Vertical scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frame roles:</td>
<td>speaker ------ giver ---</td>
<td>source of motion --- top position</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>addressee/ recipient ---</td>
<td>goal of motion --- bottom position</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3rd person thing given ---</td>
<td>moving trajector ---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3rd person thing given ---</td>
<td>direction of motion --- pole towards which trajector changes position</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This differences in where the clash occurs are present precisely because different metaphors are at play in a single instance of *kudasaru* or *sasiageru*. First, these verbs are often used in cases where this is no actual giving involved; rather, they are used in a verb compound, which is already metaphoric in the ways discussed about V1-V2 compounds above. In these cases, the Giving and Motion along a path frames are the source domain, and the lexical verb V1 encodes the target domain, (but usually pertains to the doing of a favor). The Vertical scale frame is only introduced as a layered metaphor, added during the context of the speech act. Whether one chooses *kureru* or *kudasaru* fully depends on to whom one is talking to, and about whom.

Thus, when one is giving away from the self, the clash occurs when it comes time to consolidate the semantics of the metaphor introduced by the verbal complex with the metaphor introduced by the speaking situation. On the other hand, when giving is occurring towards self, the clash occurs between the Giving frame and the speech act scenario (independently of metaphor). The latter is a non-metaphor perspective clash, and the former is the result of clashes among metaphors.

In all cases, mental depictions of individuals are as objects with ‘layers’ of externality around them, creating coherent entities with cores. Case in point: one can not only use *kureru* and *kudasaru* to talk about giving towards oneself, but also towards one’s in-group members, i.e. family members, coworkers, classmates, etc. Similarly, giving away from self with *ageru* and *sasiageru* can happen not only towards individuals, but towards their in-group members as well. A relevant common conceptualization is that individuals are internally complex, with and internal essence, but also have additional complexity in the form of extensions from the self. Additionally, perspectivization from and towards these self-cores is lexically encoded in verbs, and is additionally extends its inferences metaphorically in V1-V2 compounds. Finally, all
interaction happens within a speech act domain that is structured by a metaphor relating social status to verticality, and all other metaphors must be consolidated with this final layer.

It is appealing to see this state of affairs and call the self’s ‘enveloping’ in an in-group layer as a type of wrapping. However, this is only a very superficial imposed metaphor, and it masks the wealth of metaphors and frame complexity that we have described here.

### 6.2 Honorifics and other indirect speech acts

The use of honorifics and politeness terms (*keigo* and *teineigo*) as well as other speech act devices in Japanese meant to create softening effects in communication (such as beautification particles and honorific address suffixes) are frequently tied in to a discussion about the nature of self conceptualization. Further, the wrapping metaphor has extended into this domain, and *keigo* is sometimes talked about using expressions that are revealing of these observer-imposed metaphors and framings. Nevertheless, we will show that these communicative management strategies as fully shaped by existing metaphors, arising in other languages such as English, and that the folk model of the self is at the heart of these metaphors, as it was for the donatory verb discussed above.

The metaphors that operate in the use of donatory verbs interact with another common metaphor: **DEFERENCE IS DISTANCE**, a metaphor detailed by Hiraga (1999). This metaphor captures the understanding of the social domain of deference, an abstract non-tangible concept, in terms of the physical domain of physical distance. This metaphor is closely related to another metaphor **INTIMACY IS CLOSENESS**. In relationships seen as being more intimate, the relationship participants are frequently talked about as being ‘close’; the opposite is also true, e.g., *she’s been so distant towards me lately*. However, note that the inference from the latter metaphor is unrelated to the inference from the former metaphor. That is, lack of intimacy (expressed in the source domain as distance) is usually attributed negative associations, while deference (also expressed as distance in the source domain) is usually attributed positive associations.\(^3\) This is owed to the interaction of yet another metaphor in inferences about attitudes towards deference as opposed to those pertaining to intimacy. Namely, **DEFERENCE IS DISTANCE** interacts with the **MORE IS UP** and **GOOD IS UP** family of metaphors, more specifically **MORE POSITIVE SOCIAL STATUS IS HIGHER POSITION ON A VERTICAL SCALE**. Therefore, it is not simply that **DEFERENCE** is **DISTANCE**, but that it is vertical distance (as thoroughly detailed in Hiraga 1999:48) that dictates our positive associations with increased deference.

Indirect speech acts are also framed metaphorically, where showing more deference is seen as being more indirect in one’s form of address. However, the very notion of communicative ‘indirectness’ is also inherently metaphorically construed, and thus a more complex metaphoric lattice underlies deference shown in speech act domains. The most direct forms of speech acts are those whose speaker meaning (the intended meaning of the speaker) match the linguistic form chosen by the speaker; indirect speech acts, conversely, are those in which speaker meaning is encoded by means of syntax incongruent with his meaning. Thus,

---

\(^3\) Conversely, lack of deference is rarely expressed linguistically as being close. Clearly, **DEFERENCE IS DISTANCE** and **LACK OF INTIMACY IS DISTANCE** are shaped by different frames in the source domains of their respective metaphors.
when one asks *Could you open the window?*, this is less so an inquiry into the addressee’s ability to open a window and more so a request to the addressee to open the window. The intended meaning (a request) is incongruent with the syntax (a question), but is encoded in a question in order to be less direct, and hence less forceful.

Of course, directness, indirectness, softness and forcefulness in the communication domain all represent metaphorically-construed target domain concepts. They emerge via the Conduit metaphor system, a system of metaphors that collectively and universally capture the ways in which we talk about communication in terms of object exchange. With respect to directness/indirectness in communication, the source domain of the conduit metaphor is a frame in which an object travels along a trajectory to a goal. That trajectory may be longer or shorter, more or less straight. Objects that follow short and/or straight trajectories will reach their goal faster, whereas objects that follow long and/or circuitous trajectories will take longer to get to their goal. Furthermore, objects that follow short and/or straight trajectories can build up velocity along the way and hence increase in speed, reaching their goal with more force. It is also true that objects are on a straighter course in the first place precisely because a sender set them into motion by applying force in propelling them; in this case, the object is approaching at a high velocity because the propeller used force in propelling it. Slow-moving objects, or those that have to take many turns along the trajectory will not reach their goal with high speeds, and will not be in danger of causing an impact into any other objects that happen to collocate with the goal.

Metaphorically, then, COMMUNICATED IDEAS ARE OBJECTS that are set in motion along a trajectory towards a goal. When those ideas are communicated ‘directly’ or ‘straight-forwardly’, they are likely to be understood faster, and make more of an emotional ‘impact’ on the addressee. Socially, it is more preferable that messages reach their recipients less ‘forcefully’, an affect value we get from the inferences present in the source domain of the metaphor: when finding ourselves on the receiving end of a moving object, we prefer that the object not hit us with large amounts of force and cause a damaging impact with our physical bodies. These metaphorical inferences are relevant and valued not only by speakers of Japanese, but more-or-less universally. In English there are also expressions such as ‘talk in a round-about manner’, ‘be too direct / indirect’, ‘soften the blow’, ‘straight talk’ and ‘be too forward’. In English, as in Japanese, sometimes there are positive connotations with directness, as in situations where making a point is more valued such as in a professional context; and other times there are negative connotations with directness, such as when decorum and a consideration of others’ feelings are important. In both languages, the same metaphors underlie all linguistic expressions, regardless of what their social connotations turn out to be.

Additionally, speech acts are seen as just that: acts. One performs a speech act in order to get things done, rather than just to talk for the sake of it. Thus, speech act metaphoricity comes out directly from the event structure metaphor network, where ACTION IS SELF-PROPELLED MOTION, and PURPOSEFUL ACTION IS SELF-PROPELLED MOTION TO A DESTINATION are staple metaphors needed to understand almost any aspect of human behavior. When combining the source domains of ACTION IS MOTION and COMMUNICATED IDEAS ARE OBJECTS, we infer that COMMUNICATING IDEAS constitutes a type of ACTION, metaphorically understood as the launching of objects into motion towards a goal. The speed and force with which we, as communicators, set those objects
in motion depends on how much ‘damage’ we are willing to allow those objects to inflict upon their recipients.

As we see from the above, a complex set of primary metaphors lie behind the use of honorific forms, and any type of concern with politeness and face-saving in Japanese, as well as in any other language. These metaphors are firmly grounded in embodied experience, namely our physical experience with motion, with moving objects, and with manipulating objects. The complex force-dynamics we build up from these physical interactions get mapped into the target domains of communication and interaction.

6.3 Lexical frames, constructions and metaphors

To get an insight into the self metaphors in English, we use the English grammar as a hint to tell us, for instance, which is the controlling entity and which is the controlled entity when the Subject is in control of the Self, as in I have to get a hold of myself. The argument structure constructions in English enable the mapping between the various frame elements to be identifiable by recourse to the grammar. While many of these argument structure constructions and their mappings to the frames exist in Japanese as well, giving very similar metaphoric readings (as we saw in sentence (2)), Japanese additionally has certain types of complex lexical constructions not as common (albeit still present) in English.

(6) a. Kare-wa mattaku jiseisin ga nai.\(^4\)
    ‘He denies himself nothing.’

(6) b. Kanojo-wa taihen hara-o tateta node, jizeisin-o usinat-ta.
    ‘She was so angry that she lost control of herself.’

In this example, a single lexical word, jiseisin, (lit. ‘self rule spirit’) encodes a complex frame structure that in English would require clausal elements. Further, the Japanese compound encodes multiple frames, whereas the English gloss only encodes the control frame, and does so in a dedicated lexical item. In Japanese, jiseisin evokes the target frame of self (via ji-), the source concept of control or rule (-sei-), and additionally the essence frame metonymically via -sin (heart, metonymically and metaphorically extended to ‘spirit’ or ‘character trait’). (7) and (8) illustrate this phenomenon with additional examples.

(7) Jiboujiki-ni naru na.
    ‘Never surrender yourself to despair.’
    (lit. don’t become self-violent and self-rejecting/abandoning)

(8) Kare-wa mou jikatu-dekiru nenrei da.
    ‘He’s at the age when he can support himself.’ (lit. he can self-support)

These complex metaphorical lexical compounds capture both target and source domain frames in the same lexical construction, rather than spreading out the frame elements across the clause. We see this sometimes in English too, with examples such as self-control (target=self, source=control), where the noun-noun compound captures both the source domain and target

\(^4\) Much of the data here is obtained from jisho.org, a complete online interactive dictionary.
domain. Studying the occurrence of the lexical element \textit{ji} (自) alone, as we have done in sentences (6-8) above, is enlightening with respect to the frequency and diversity of complex expressions for the common self-subject metaphor network. However, there are many more ways to study this complex lexeme-internal framing and metaphoric mapping, some of which do not include overt mention of the self. These should be explored individually, as mapping structures will arise given the particulars of the constructional specifications and the lexical meanings of morphemes.

What they have in common is that the subject-self metaphor seems to arise, just as it does in English, albeit with different constructional manifestations and different way of mapping to arguments. Surveying these types of complex nouns and verbs, we see many of the same subject-self dynamics: the subject controls/manipulates/helps/encumbers the self; the self and subject are at odds or in conflict; the self and subject have a relationship; the subject talks to the self; the self is the ‘face’, and there are multiple faces that are context-dependent, etc. However, few, if any, of these metaphoric expressions portray the self as wrapped or wrapping.

6.4 Lexical metonymies and metaphors

It is clear that to understand any metaphoric mappings, and even to discern what frames are at work in a particular meaning, in Japanese we mostly need to look at the lexical and morphological level, as frame elements, and the mappings between them, tend to occur at these levels. When we zoom it to the lexical construction level, certain patterns seem to emerge. We also suddenly require robust polysemy analyses of sub-lexical components, and also need to consider the semantics conveniently captured in the Sino-Japanese (kanji) script. Polysemy networks emerge, which are governed by the same principles across languages: frame-metonymic, category-metonymic, and metaphoric extensions, as well as evidence of semantic enrichment and semantic bleaching. In this section we detail some lexical constructions and the polysemies they reveal, to show that one must look more locally than the clausal level to find metaphor in general, and metaphors for the self in particular.

One good place to start is with the concept of \textit{uchi}, or ‘the self and self’s in-group’, as this concept is frequently used to create dichotomies that are subsequently seen as ubiquitous in Japanese thought. \textit{Uchi} is a term simultaneously used to refer to oneself, one’s in-group, and one’s physical home, revealing a polysemy structure relying heavily on metonymic extensions. Etymologically, it refers to the physical home (家), but it has acquired a meaning frame-metonymically extending to members of the home, and further to oneself as a member of the home and that group of members. A further categorial metonymic extension allows one to refer to other types of in-group member (including those not necessarily living in your home) with \textit{uchi}. One may, for instance, refer to one’s boss as \textit{uchi no jousi}. Also, \textit{uchi} also means ‘inside’ (内), another frame-metonymy pertaining to the home, (a dwelling with an interior and exterior), but extending to other types of interiors, especially where that interior also represents the essence of that object or entity. Finally, there is an additional metaphoric extension of \textit{uchi} via the metaphor TEMPORAL DURATION IS SPATIAL DISTANCE, where a stretch of time can be talked about as having an interior, as in \textit{ichijikan no uchi} ‘within one hour’. This is a universal metaphor, and most languages (as seen in the translation, English included) express this metaphor linguistically in one way or another.
Uchi and soto are frequently used in anthropological narrative to describe in-group/out-group dynamics in Japanese society, where soto refers to the outgroup, and the normative behaviors and stances associated with dealing with the soto. In these narratives, uchi and soto are used at a meta-discourse level, as terms researchers adopt to account for and depict observed norms and behaviors; but these terms are not necessarily used by speakers themselves, whether with each other or with the researcher. For example, while uchi is part of the practiced language, with the polysemy structure described above, soto is never used overtly (i.e., one would not refer to an outgroup member as soto no x, ‘the outsider x’). In essence, in-group stances and in-group interactions are discussed explicitly and unabashedly (both within-speech community and towards researchers), but out-group stances and interactions are not expressed as readily. Thus, while uchi is linguistically informative, since it appears abundantly in practiced language and with a diverse polysemy structure, soto does not; information about the conceptualization of soto cannot be inferred as a natural antonym of uchi.

Uchi is just one of many terms used for the self, for those close to one, and for one’s ingroup. It’s also just one of many terms used to express metaphors pertaining to self-perception, and interpersonal relations. Table 1 outlines a selection of other similar words and concepts, some of which are already metaphoric or metonymic.

| Table 1 | Expressions for the self, with meanings currently in use and literal meanings |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Expression** | **English translation for current usage** | **Literal translation (defined as center of polysemy network and historical origin)** |
| jī, mizukara (自) | self | self |
| shuga (主我) | ego, self | master/leader ego; principle-main ego; you (kenjougo) |
| jiko (自己) | self | self-on oneself |
| ga (我) | I, us | the self, the ego (Buddhism) |
| wa, ware (我) | you (familiar or derogatory) |
| wanusi (我主) | myself, oneself, I, me; you (derogatory) |
| wagami (我身) | one's own | one's own (kenjougo); [also: serpent, snake] |
| onore (己) | one's own | I (archaic); you male 1st person pronoun; you (derogatory) |
| na (己) | | |
| ore, ura (己) | | |
| ore (己) | | |
| ate, watasi, watashi (私) | me | me, private |
| shouga (小我) | self, ego | little me |
| shousei (小生) | my humble self | little life |
| waga-, ware (吾) | one’s own | one’s own |
| jika (自家) | own, personal | of the self’s interior; of the self’s essence |
| sin (身) | person, self | person, somebody; one’s station in life |
| uchi (家) | in-group, family, home | house |
Many of these expressions are archaic, and no longer in usage in common speech. However, their existence is revealing of some of the meaning extensions that developed over time. For instance, at some point the self-reference term *shousei* (小生), a term that was used by men in letter correspondence to refer to themselves, is derived from *shou* (小) ‘small’ and *sei* (生) ‘life, existence’. The use of *sei* in this case reveals a frame metonymy from one’s current physical location, to one’s state of existing in that current physical position. There is a further extension from existence in a state to a more temporally-unbounded concept of life overall. This develops into the cross-linguistically visible metaphor BEING ALIVE IS BEING AT ONE’S CURRENT LOCATION (e.g. *she’s no longer with us but in the here-after*, to mean deceased). The existence is mapped to the entity experiencing the existence, the self, and thus the self metonymically comes to be associated with existing, with life. The use of *shou* ‘little’ is additionally metaphorical. It attributes thinghood to states, such as the state of existing, such that STATES ARE OBJECTS, or STATES ARE BOUNDED REGIONS. If states can be talked about as objects and bounded regions, they can be described in terms of size, in this case small. The attribution of small size to one’s own self, by accessing the concept of one’s own modest existence, this expression is a quintessentially humble expression. The *shou* ‘little’ not only makes use of STATES ARE BOUNDED REGIONS, but also an additional interactionally-defined metaphor: IMPORTANT IS BIG, UNIMPORTANT IS SMALL. Thus, humility is defined metaphorically as the presentation of a metaphorical persona that is smaller so as to avoid seeming like one is attributing too much importance to oneself.

The expressions in Table 1 have undergone several leaps of metonymy, and some are metaphoric. All encode a deictic center, whether that center is a more abstract ‘someone’s self’, or whether it is localized to one’s own self. It is clear that some are more flexible (or less deictically grounded) when we notice that some can switch from referring to oneself to referring to the second person, e.g. *ore* and *wanusi* being used as a derogatory form of ‘you.’

7 Wrapping-up self metaphors

In this paper, we explored the many construction types, both lexical and grammatical, that in one way or another capture dimensions of metaphors pertaining to the conceptualization of the self. It was argued that while taking a critical revisionary stance towards existing metaphors about Japanese cultural models, we must also offer solutions and adequate replacements for those metaphors. The wrapping metaphor, widely a part of the meta-discourse on Japanese culture and language, was not found present at any level of linguistic and pre-linguistic conceptual representation, but was found to be an epiphenomenon of the anthropological observation process, when the observer’s innate embodied conceptual structures come into contact with similar structures in the minds of the observed. These embodied primary metaphors that are shared pertain to the domain of communication (the Conduit metaphor), the domain of time, the domain of speech act interactions, the domain of social hierarchies and interpersonal relations, and of course the domain of the conceptualization of the self as a dynamic subject-self interaction. Other primary metaphors, such as the object and location event structure metaphor systems, are present and lend inferences at every level. Further work involving naturally-occurring language data from both spoken and written media will be enlightening as to the relative conventional frequencies of particular patterns of metaphor use in actual speech contexts.
References


