

The Style Shift between *Boku* & *Ore*

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- Personal E-mail
- Same social context
- Same speaker/writer
- Same addressee

However....,

Style shift

between *boku* and *ore*

Research Question

- What do people with the style shift between *boku* and *ore* in a discourse?
 - Step1: General features of *Boku* and *ore*
 - Step2: *Boku* and *ore* Social/interpersonal motivations
 - Step3: *Boku* and *ore* Discousal motivation

Boku and *ore* in Japanese text books

❖ Genki

➤ *Boku*: Used by manly by men

❖ Yokoso

➤ *Boku*: “I (male, informal)”

❖ Spoken Japanese

➤ *Boku* is traditionally a masculine nominal, a less formal equivalent than *wata (ku)si* for males.

* No explanation about *ore* in these text books.

General features of *Boku* and *Ore*

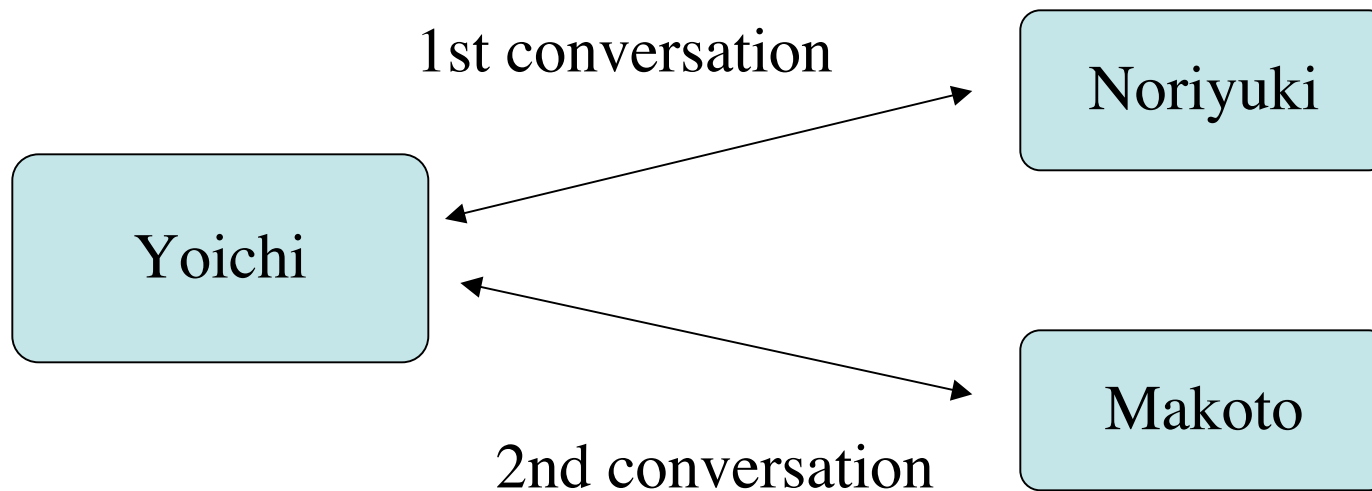
- ❖ *Boku* and *ore* are mainly used by men.
- ❖ *Boku* and *ore* are used toward the same social level addressee to the speaker or a lower level addressee.
- ❖ *Boku* is more polite than *ore*, which has more abrupt sounds.

(Daijirin 2nd edition, 1994)

Data 1 for this study (Telephone conversations)

Subjects :

Yoichi	Graduate student	26 yr old	
Noriyuki	Elementary school teacher	26 yr old	Yoichi's friend
Makoto	Graduate student	33 yr old	Yoichi's Senpai



Yoichi's distribution of *boku* and *ore*

Interlocutor	Age	Relationship with Yoichi	Period	# of <i>boku</i>	# of <i>ore</i>
Noriyuki	26	Friend	1 h 15 m	11 (24%)	35 (76%)
Makoto	33	Senior Friend	1 h 30m	31 (89%)	4 (11%)

Noriyuki's and Makoto's distribution of *boku* and *ore*

Speaker	Age	Relationship with Yoichi	Period	# of <i>boku</i>	# of <i>ore</i>
Noriyuki	26	Friend	1 h 15 m	0 (0%)	15 (100%)
Makoto	33	Senior Friend	1 h 30m	1 (7%)	14 (93%)

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Previous studies of style shift

da form \Leftrightarrow *desu/masu* form

- Makino (1983, 1990)

Theory of the speaker orientation

- ✓ “The speaker’s communicative motivation to express some highly subjective and presuppositional information by inwardly looking at himself”

→ *da* form

Previous studies of style shift

da form \Leftrightarrow *desu/masu* form

- Maynard (1993)

For sudden emotional surge

For expressing narrative-internal point of view \rightarrow *da* form

\Rightarrow Low and high awareness of “thou”

- ✓ Importance of “thou” for the realization of “self” among Japanese. The speaking self’s motivation for the *da* and *desu* verb morphology is in fact founded in the Japanese speaker’s sensitivity toward “thou.”
- ✓ The more the speaking self is aware of “thou” as a separate and potentially opposing entity, the more elaborate the markers for discourse modality become, ¹⁰ one of which is the *desu/masu* ending.

Examples of *da* form and *desu/masu* form

1) 「ひとりで来た。(abrupt)

‘A person is coming out.’

Low awareness
toward an addressee

「あの子ですよ」(formal)

‘That is the very girl.’

High awareness
toward an addressee

2) 「ああ、わかった」(abrupt)

‘Oh, I remember it now’

Low awareness
toward an addressee

Yoichi's *boku* and *ore* with a senior addressee

Boku (89%)

- しかも、**僕**遅れて出したんですよ。
- **僕**が勝手に感じているだけなんですが。
- それでは**僕**そろそろ行きますので。



Occurred with *desu/masu* form



High awareness
toward an addressee

Ore (11%)

- ちょっと大丈夫かな**俺**。
- いや、**俺**、こんな人と付き合っちゃっていいのかなって。
- ある時点で**俺**はこの人が好きだという気がしてきて、この人は本当に素敵の人だと。



Self-oriented/ voice in his mind



Low awareness
toward an addressee ₂

Data 2 for this study (Web-log)

Atsuhiko Nakata

- *Japanese comedian*
- *25 years old*
- *Jul. 07 - Nov. 07*
- *37166 characters*
- *Boku: 117*
- *Ore: 24*

Boku is used mainly.



High awareness toward an audience of the web-log.

=Public Speech

Nakata's style shift between *boku* and *ore* (1) - Cartoon

F: 「俺、あの漫画好き」
“I like the cartoon”

N: 「あ、俺も」
“Oh, me too!”

F: 「あの漫画のあそこがいいよね」
“That is a good part of the cartoon, right?”

N: 「え？う、うん」
“Yeah, yeah....”

N: だいたい、この「う、うん」のところで「そこ？そこ好きなの？その部分でこの作品に惹かれてんの？・・・俺とは違うね！」と心の中で思っている、僕は。
About my comment of “yeah...” toward what the friend tried to get sympathy from me, actually, I am thinking like “You like that part? Are you attracted to that part? I am different from you!” in my mind.

Boku - Public speech

Ore - Self-oriented/

Voice in his mind

Nakata's style shift between *boku* and *ore* (2) - Development

Boku - Public speech

Ore - Self-oriented/

Voice in his mind

N:この自分が変わっていくという実感を

僕は肯定的にとらえている。

あれ、俺今何か変わろうとしているという、

なんだろう、「成長の音」というのが

体の中から聞こえるのが好きだ。

I think the realization like “I am changing” is a positive thing. I like feeling like “mm? Now something is changing inside of me” or listening to something like the sound of growth inside my body.

Conclusion

- ✓ The usage of *Boku* and *ore* are chosen according to the social context.
- ✓ Also *Boku* and *ore* are used in a discourse even in the same social context.
- ✓ In the case that a speaker, who uses both pronouns, talks with a superior addressee, *boku* is used when the awareness of “thou” is high, and *ore* is used when it is low.

Future study

- ✓ Expand the database
- ✓ The case that a speaker uses basically *ore* with the low awareness of “thou”, and shift to *boku* with high awareness of “thou.”
- ✓ Consider how to teach the usage of *boku* and *ore*, which is not fully treated in Japanese text books.

Reference

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