

Let's talk about you and me

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Abstract

A recent development in Dutch concerns the deictic interpretation of the second person singular pronoun *je*, which may refer to the speaker only, as shown below.

- (i) Je kreeg de bal van Huntelaar en toen schoot je op het doel
You got the ball from Huntelaar and then you targeted on the goal
'I got the ball from Huntelaar and then I targeted on the goal'

In such examples the subject refers to the speaker, and not the hearer, but at the same time these examples come along with an implicature stating that the hearer would have done the same thing if s/he were in the speaker's situation.

This does lead to the following two questions. First, why is it the case that a second person singular pronoun may refer to the speaker only? And, second, why is it the case that when self-referring *je* is used, this always comes along with an implicature of the kind described above.

In this article I address these questions by arguing that this behaviour of Dutch *je* is a consequence of its semantically unmarked status w.r.t. the 1st person singular pronoun *ik*. Along the lines of Sauerland (2008), I propose that Dutch *je* only carries a feature [PARTICIPANT], whereas *ik* carries two features: [SPEAKER] and [PARTICIPANT]. Consequently, *je* may in principal refer to all participants in the conversation, enabling *je* to refer to the speaker as well.

The fact that *je* normally does not refer to the speaker but to the hearer only, must then follow as some kind of blocking effect, which I will formulate in terms of a slightly reformulated version of the Principle of Maximize Presupposition, initially proposed by Heim (1991). I will furthermore show that this principle allows overriding of such blocking effects in exactly those conversational contexts where self-referring *je* occurs, namely those contexts where the speaker wants to convey that what goes for him would also go for the hearer if he were in the situation described by the speaker.

Finally, I demonstrate that whereas *je*'s possibility of referring to the speaker only should not be seen as a special subcase of the impersonal usage of *je*, its emergence is a direct consequence of the cause that triggered the emergence of the usage *je* as an impersonal marker as well: the loss of the impersonal pronoun *men*.

1. Introduction

In February 2008 a new episode was added to the ever-exiting developments in Dutch politics. In a Sunday morning television show former Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende uttered the following sentence:

- (1) Zonder geloof kun je niet functioneren¹
Without religion can you not function
'You cannot function without religion'

This led to a debate in the Dutch Parliament and press about what was actually meant by this sentence, most notably concerning the interpretation of the 2nd person singular pronoun *je*. Three different readings were in principle available, all described in (2):

¹ *The hour of power* (Sunday February 17, Nederland 1)

- (2) a. *Je* refers to the interviewer (referring to the addressee).
- b. *Je* receives an impersonal reading (comparable to the impersonal pronoun 'one')
- c. *Je* only refers to the Prime Minister (referring to the speaker).

Reading (2a) was immediately excluded. Only in a sequence of utterances describing the addressee, the pronoun in (1) could receive interpretation (2)a. This was clearly not the case in the interview. Moreover, in this interview, the more formal 2nd person pronoun *u* was used to address the hearer. Hence the debate focussed on interpretations (2)b and (2)c.

Public statements by members of the government officially reflect the position of the entire government. Therefore, if (1) were to be interpreted as (2b), the government would publically state that one could not function without religion, which would violate the general policy that government does not make religious claims. This led to an attack against the former Prime Minister by some of his opponents.

But defenders of the Prime Minister said that (1) should be interpreted in a *Cruijff*-like fashion, i.e. like (2c), where *je* only referred to the speaker. This way of reference has been named after the famous soccer player, as it is Cruijff and many other soccer players who constantly use *je* to refer to themselves. An example, after Bennis et al. (2004), is given below:

- (3) Je kreeg de bal van Huntelaar en toen schoot je op het doel
 You got the ball from Huntelaar and then you targeted on the goal
 'I got the ball from Huntelaar and then I targeted on the goal'

Example (3) was uttered in an interview situation as well and has a clear episodic past tense interpretation. Since impersonal pronouns are generally banned from episodic contexts, such an impersonal interpretation is impossible for (3), as is, given the context of the utterance, a reading where *je* refers to the hearer. In (3) the pronoun *je* can thus only refer to the speaker.

The facts described above illustrate that in Dutch the weak 2nd person singular pronoun *je* may refer to the speaker only, a phenomenon referred to as self-referring *je*. The observation that Dutch exhibits self-referring *je* is not new. The first description, to the best of my knowledge, is Appel (1993), followed by Van Wassenaar (1994), Onrust (1995), Klaase (1995), Van Hout (2003) and Bennis et al (2004). A recent corpus study investigation of self-referring *je* has been presented in Tarenskeen (2010), indicating that the usage of self-referring *je* is a recent development but has already been fairly widespread in the spoken language.

Since Dutch also exhibits a first person singular pronoun *ik* ('I'), a question that immediately arises, is to what extent these utterances with self-referring *je* differ from utterances where *ik* would have been used, as in (4) and (5):

- (4) Zonder geloof kan ik niet functioneren
 Without religion can I not function
 'I cannot function without religion'
- (5) Ik kreeg de bal van Huntelaar en toen schoot ik op het doel
 I got the ball from Huntelaar and then targeted I on the goal
 'I got the ball from Huntelaar and then I targeted on the goal'

The readings in (4) and (5) are indeed similar to the ones with self-referring *je*, but these examples crucially differ in their pragmatics. The examples in (1) and (3) come along with an

implicature that the hearer would do / have done the same thing as the speaker in such a situation. Crucially, examples (4) and (5) do not introduce such an implicature.

Klaasse (2005), following Van Wassenaar (1994) and Onrust (1995), states that by using self-referring *je* the speaker always suggests that what goes for him goes for anybody else who is in the same situation. For this reason, self-referring *je* is particularly suitable to utter in cases of self-defence, modesty (regardless whether it is true or false modesty) or other cases where the speaker invokes empathy to the hearer (cf. Tarenskeen 2010).

This does lead to the following two questions. First, why is it the case that a second person singular pronoun may refer to the speaker only? And, second, why is it the case that when self-referring *je* is used, this always comes along with an implicature of the kind described above.

In this article I address these questions by arguing that this behaviour of Dutch *je* is a consequence of its semantically unmarked status w.r.t. the 1st person singular pronoun *ik*. Along the lines of Sauerland (2008), I propose that Dutch *je* only carries a feature [PARTICIPANT], whereas *ik* carries two features: [SPEAKER] and [PARTICIPANT]. Consequently, *je* may in principle refer to all participants in the conversation, enabling *je* to refer to the speaker as well.

The fact that *je* normally does not refer to the speaker but to the hearer only, must then follow as some kind of blocking effect, which I will formulate in terms of a slightly reformulated version of the Principle of Maximize Presupposition, initially proposed by Heim (1991). I will furthermore show that this principle allows overriding of such blocking effects in exactly those conversational contexts where self-referring *je* occurs, namely those contexts where the speaker wants to convey that what goes for him would also go for the hearer if he were in the situation described by the speaker.

Finally, I demonstrate that whereas *je*'s possibility of referring to the speaker only should not be seen as a special subcase of the impersonal usage of *je*, its emergence is a direct consequence of the cause that triggered the emergence of the usage *je* as an impersonal marker as well: the loss of the impersonal pronoun *men* ('one') from the spoken language.

This paper is set up as follows. In section 2, I discuss the notion of semantic markedness and show that Dutch *je* and *ik* stand in exactly the same kind of semantic markedness relation as e.g. 3rd person masculine and feminine pronouns *hij* ('he') and *zij* ('she'). In section 3, I follow Sauerland's (2008) analysis of semantic markedness as a reflection of asymmetric feature composition, implementing this proposal in Harley & Ritter's (2002) model of feature hierarchy. In section 4, I compare speaker-referring *je* with *je*'s impersonal usage, both synchronically and diachronically, and I also compare the behaviour of Dutch 2nd person *je* with and 2nd person pronouns in other languages. Section 5 concludes.

2. Semantic markedness in the Dutch pronominal system

In this section I argue that the Dutch 1st person pronouns (*ik* 'I', *mij/me* 'me', *mijn* 'my') and the weak 2nd person pronoun (*je* in all forms) stand in a semantic markedness relation, where semantic markedness is understood as a difference in terms of specificity between two opposite elements, the most specific one being the marked one. Semantic markedness must be distinguished from other types of markedness, such as morpho-syntactic markedness. It may be possible that some categories may stand in a semantic markedness relation that is opposite to their morpho-syntactic markedness relation. Number categories form a good example for this. Whereas in English the plural is semantically unmarked w.r.t. the singular (cf. Sauerland et al. 2005), morphosyntactically it is the plural that is marked w.r.t. the singular. In this article I argue that in Dutch *ik* and *je* stand in a similar markedness relation:

je is semantically unmarked w.r.t. *ik*, even though morphosyntactically 1st person is unmarked w.r.t. 2nd person (cf. Aalberse 2009).

Sauerland (2008) describes four different diagnostics to determine semantic markedness. One of them, the dominance test, dates back to Greenberg (1966); the other ones have been proposed by Sauerland. The dominance test, however, does not apply to weak pronouns and can therefore not be used. Sauerland's own tests all indicate that *je* is semantically unmarked w.r.t. *ik*.

Below I briefly discuss the tests, showing how they apply to cases of uncontroversial semantic markedness and that they provide similar results when applied to 1st and 2nd person pronouns.

2.1 Quantification

The first test I adopt from Sauerland (2008) involves quantification and builds upon the observation that the reference of pronominal DPs may vary under the scope of a quantifier. Then markedness determines to what extent the referential domain of such a pronominal DP may vary. To illustrate this, let's focus on 3rd person singular pronominal reference in Dutch. Since Dutch has its 3rd person singular pronouns being specified for gender, a quantifier can either bind the masculine, the feminine or the neutral pronoun.² However, such pronouns, when being bound, differ in their semantic behaviour. Take examples (6) and (7):

- (6) a. Als iemand de telefoon wil gebruiken moet hij eerst betalen
If somebody the telephone wants use must he first pay
'If somebody wants to use the telephone, they'll have to pay first'
b. Als iemand de telefoon wil gebruiken moet zij eerst betalen
If somebody the telephone wants use must she first pay
'If somebody wants to use the telephone, she'll have to pay first'
- (7) a. Iedereen die zijn creditcard heeft verloren moet deze blokkeren
Everybody who lost his credit card must this block
'Everybody who lost their credit card must block it'
b. Iedereen die haar creditcard heeft verloren moet deze blokkeren
Everybody who lost her credit card must this block
'Everybody who lost her credit card must block it'

All the examples in (6) and (7) have a bound variable reading (apart from a reading where the pronoun is interpreted deictically). In the b-examples under the bound variable reading the domain of quantification is restricted to females, a consequence of the choice for the usage of the female pronoun *zij/haar* ('she'/'her'). Interestingly, if the masculine pronouns are used, no such restriction shows up. In the a-examples of (6) and (7) *hij/zijn* ('he'/'his') may refer to both males and females. This renders masculine pronouns in Dutch semantically unmarked w.r.t. feminine pronouns: feminine pronouns mark gender restrictions on the set of possible referents; masculine pronouns lack such marking.

The question then arises as to whether this test shows that Dutch *je* is unmarked w.r.t. *ik*. This is, however, not as straightforward as the application to gender pronouns, since it is well known that of all person features, 3rd person is the least marked and may therefore block

² If the first argument of the quantifier is restricted to humans, the neuter pronoun is no longer an option.

1st or 2nd person pronouns to appear in bound variable readings in the first place. This is also the reason why the bound variable readings require a 3rd person pronoun to begin with.³

- (8)
- a. Iedereen die zijn huiswerk heeft gedaan, krijgt een voldoende
Everybody who his homework has done gets a sufficient.mark
'Everybody who did his homework, gets a sufficient mark'
 - b. Iedereen die je huiswerk heeft gedaan, krijgt een voldoende
Everybody who your homework has done gets a sufficient.mark
'Everybody who did your homework, gets a sufficient mark'
 - c. Iedereen die mijn huiswerk heeft gedaan, krijgt een voldoende
Everybody who my homework has done gets a sufficient.mark
'Everybody who did my homework, gets a sufficient mark'

Thus, in order to successfully apply the quantification test to determine the markedness relation between *ik* and *je*, contexts need to be provided such that 3rd person plural pronouns may not be included in the first place. Note that this is not simply possible by replacing the quantifier to something like 'one of us'. Since 'one of us', despite its denotation, still behaves as a 3rd person singular, 3rd person is still the most salient bound pronoun, thus ruling out instances of 1st or 2nd person. Only (9)a receives a bound variable reading.

- (9)
- a. Een van ons moet zijn huiswerk doen
One of us must his homework do
'One of us must do his homework'
 - b. Een van ons moet je huiswerk doen
One of us must your homework do
'One of us must do your homework'
 - c. Een van ons moet mijn huiswerk doen
One of us must my homework do
'One of us must do my homework'

Exclusion of a 3rd person pronoun to participate in a bound variable requires that the antecedent lacks any 3rd person features, which could be the case if it is a coordination of 1st and 2nd person. Those indeed may yield bound variable readings with the 2nd but not with the 1st person pronoun, as illustrated below:

- (10) Heb jij of ik je examen gehaald?
Have you or I your exam passed
'Did you or I pass the exam'
- (11) Alle andere logen in die tijd, maar aan iedereen die aan jou of mij vroeg of je het leuk vond, gaf je een eerlijk antwoord.
All others lied in that time, but everyone that to you or me asked whether you it nice found, gave you an honest answer
'All others lied at that time, but to everyone who asked you or me whether you liked it, you gave an honest answer'

³ Though see Heim (2008) and Kratzer (2009) for examples where 1st or 2nd person pronouns may participate in a bound variable reading if they are bound by an antecedent that carries the same person features. For instance, (i) has a bound variable reading where *me* is bound by *I*.

(i) Only I did my homework (the others didn't do theirs)

In (10) *je* can be interpreted a pronoun bound by *jij of ik* ('you or I'). One of the most salient readings of (11) is also a bound variable reading where in those days, everyone who would ask me or you, would get an honest answer, but everyone asking the same question to someone else with receive a dishonest reply. Those readings are unavailable once *je* is replaced by a 1st person singular pronoun.

(12) Heb jij of ik mijn examen gehaald?

Have you or I my exam passed

'Did you or I pass my exam'

(13) Alle andere logen in die tijd, maar aan iedereen die aan jou of mij vroeg of ik het leuk vond, gaf ik een eerlijk antwoord.

All others lied in that time, but everyone that to you or me asked whether I it nice found, gave I an honest answer

'All others lied at that time, but to everyone who asked you or me whether I liked it, I gave an honest answer'

This clearly shows that even though masculine 3rd person singular pronouns are more unmarked than *je*, *je* is still semantically unmarked w.r.t. 1st person singular pronouns.

2.2 Epistemic status

Another test for semantic markedness involves epistemic status of the semantic properties of the referent. Again, it turns out that opposite elements may differ in terms of epistemic speaker commitments. In order to show this, suppose somebody comes home from holiday and finds out that there has been a burglary. Now, this person could utter (14)a without being committed to the thief being a male. However, (14)b can only be uttered if the speaker is certain that the thief is female. This asymmetric relation in terms of speaker commitment, again, reflects that masculine in Dutch is unmarked w.r.t. feminine.

(14) a. Hij heeft mijn moeders juwelen gestolen

He has my mother's jewels stolen

'He stole my mother's jewels'

b. Zij heeft mijn moeders juwelen gestolen

She has my mother's jewels stolen

'She stole my mother's jewels'

The same applies to *je* and *ik*. Suppose two friends play a game of cards and it's a tie. The situation is such that at this particular stage of the game for both speakers the only way to win is to get a red ace and there is only one red ace in the game yet. In such contexts one can utter (15)a, indicating that this is the case for either the speaker or the hearer.⁴ Uttering (15)b would only mean that the hearer will win the game by getting a red ace (a reading that under

⁴ Note that (15)a lacks a generic reading: it is only the case that in this particular situation players win the game by getting a red ace. The sentence containing an impersonal pronoun is odd in such situations:

(i) Als men een rode aas trekt, wint men

If one gets a red ace, wins one

'If one gets the red ace, one will win the game'

proper intonation (15)a may also yield) and uttering (15)c only makes a statement about how the speaker can win this game. The crucial difference here is that while (15)c, containing the 1st person pronoun *ik*, makes a statement about the speaker only, whereas (15)a, while containing the 2nd person pronoun *je*, does not make a statement about the hearer only. This also shows that *je* is less marked than *ik*.

- (15) a. Als je een rode aas trekt win je
If you get a red ace, you win
'Whoever gets the red ace, will win the game'
- b. Als jij een rode aas trekt win jij
If you get a red ace, you win
'If you get the red ace, you'll win the game'
- c. Als ik een rode aas trek win ik
If you now get a red ace, you win
'If I get the red ace, I'll win the game'

2.3 *Emergence after pragmatic blocking*

The third test for semantic markedness concerns emergence after pragmatic blocking and reflects another asymmetry between two opposite elements: it shows that in cases where for whatever reason a true statement containing one member of an opposite pair should be weakened down, one sometimes can select the other member of the opposite pair. When that is the case, these opposite elements must stand in a semantic markedness relation.

For instance, if a speaker, for some reason, wants to be less specific about the gender of a referent, he may choose an unmarked alternative. This is exemplified in (16). Suppose a teacher caught a female student on cheating and informed the class that the cheating student received the lowest grade possible. Suppose further that the teacher did not want reveal the identity of this student, not even by disclosing whether it was a male or female student. Then the teacher could utter (16)a. The usage of the masculine pronoun does not entail that referent be male. Uttering (16)b, by contrast, does reveal the gender of the cheating student: (16)b can never be used to remain underspecified about the gender of the cheating student.

- (16) a. Een student heb ik betrapt op spieken. Hij heeft een 1 gekregen
One student have I caught on cheating. He has a 1 got
'I caught one student cheating. He got a 1 (i.e. the lowest grade possible)'
- b. Een student heb ik betrapt op spieken. Zij heeft een 1 gekregen
One student have I caught on cheating. She has a 1 got
'I caught one student cheating. He got a 1 (i.e. the lowest grade possible)'

Pragmatic blocking does not only emerge if the speaker deliberately aims at being less informative. Blocking strategies apply if for whatever reason the speaker wants to convey a less direct expression strategy. This is, for instance, a general strategy for expressing politeness. In many languages, the honorific pronoun emerged from a 3rd person singular (e.g. German *Sie*) or a 2nd person plural form (e.g. French *vous*) form, all unmarked forms w.r.t. the 2nd person singular.

Also, sometimes alternative pronouns can be selected to avoid rude language or sexual connotations, as is illustrated by the following Dutch idiomatic expression:

- (17) a. Ik werk niet voor de kat zijn kut
I work not for the cat his cunt
'I don't work for free' (no sexual connotation)
- b. Ik werk niet voor de kat haar kut
I work not for the cat her cunt
'I don't work for free' (strong sexual connotation)

Even though the idiomatic expression *voor de kat zijn kut werken* contains the pejorative word *kut* ('cunt'), the example, albeit it slightly rude, lacks a strong sexual connotation, which is due to the usage of the masculine possessive *zijn* ('his'). If the biologically correct possessive *haar* ('her') would have been used, all of the sudden the example would get a very strong sexual connotation.

Hence, if the speaker has some reason not to use a marked form, an unmarked replacer can be used. It is indeed this fact that is behind the usage of self-referring *je*. Let me illustrate this by showing two examples. Both (18)a and (18)b could be uttered as an answer to the question as to why somebody looked very unfit and sleepy in the morning.

- (18) a. Andrew vroeg of je nog mee ging naar de bar en dan heb je ja gezegd ook al weet je dat je morgen vroeg op moet.
Andrew asked whether you still PRT went to the pub and then have you yes said PRT PRT know you that you tomorrow early up must
'Andrew asked whether you'd join to the pub and then you said yes, although you know you have to get up early tomorrow'
- b. Andrew vroeg of ik nog mee ging naar de bar en toen heb ik ja gezegd ook al weet ik dat ik morgen vroeg op moet.
Andrew asked whether I still PRT went to the pub and then have I yes said PRT PRT know I that I tomorrow early up must
'Andrew asked whether I'd join to the pub and then I said yes, although I knew I had to get up early tomorrow'

The two answers have the same readings: the speaker went to the bar the evening before whilst knowing that he had to get up early next morning. At first sight (18)b should be the only appropriate answer, since the statement is only about the speaker. It is not some generic claim. However, there may be reasons for the speaker not to use this answer, as it describes that this was solely his particular choice. Instead, the speaker may prefer (18)a, which is felt to be weaker. As already discussed in section 1, an example like (18)b weakens down the speaker's choice by inferring that the hearer would probably have done the same thing in that situation. But this is only possible, if *je* is indeed semantically unmarked w.r.t. *ik*.

The same applies to example (19). Suppose I would be the only person ever born in the world with three hands and that I were asked about it in an interview. Then I could utter both (19)a and (19)b. Again, (19)b would be the most straightforward example: the speaker uses the 1st person pronoun *ik* as he is the only person in the world with three hands. However, in order to weaken down his special status, the speaker might just as well utter (19)a, whose subject, again, can only refer to the speaker, but is still felt to be more hearer-emphatic: it infers that the hearer would probably also use his third hand if he were born with it.

- (19) a. Ja, je bent er mee geboren en dan kun je die derde hand net zo goed gebruiken
Yes, you are PRT with born and then can you that third hand just as well use
'Well, you were born with it, so you may just as well use it'

- b. Ja, ik ben er mee geboren en dan kan ik die derde hand net zo goed gebruiken
 Yes, I am PRT with born and then can you that third hand just as well use
 ‘Well, I was born with it, so I may just as well use it’

Thus, in (18)a and (19)a there is some reason for the speaker not to use the 1st person singular, even though the speaker can fully expect that his words will be interpreted as if he said (18)b or (19)b instead. Note that this could not work the other way round. It is not possible to use a 1st person pronoun to actually convey a 2nd person pronoun: the subject *ik* in (18)b and (19)b can never be understood to refer to the hearer.⁵

These facts thus show, again, that *ik* is semantically marked w.r.t. *je*, just in the way that *zij* is semantically marked w.r.t. *hij*.

2.4 Dominance

The fourth test discussed by Sauerland is taken from Greenberg (1966) and concerns dominance effects. Dominance tests usually involve verbal agreement with coordinated arguments. In Czech, verbs agree for 3rd person gender. Coordinations of a male and female subjects, however, trigger only masculine and not feminine inflection on the finite verb:

- (20) a. Jan a Vera šl-i do biografu Czech⁶
 Jan and Vera went-masc.plur to the.movies
 ‘Jan and Vera went to the movies.’
 b. *Jan a Vera šl-y do biografu
 Jan and Vera went-fem.plur to the.movies
 ‘Jan and Vera went to the movies.’

This would then indicate that masculine is unmarked w.r.t. feminine as masculine inflection may still agree with a partly feminine subject, but not the other way round.⁷

Unfortunately, Dutch *je*, being a weak pronoun and therefore necessarily unfocused, may never appear in a coordinated structure:

- (21) *Jij of ik ...
 You or I ...

Therefore the dominance test is inapplicable to determine the semantic markedness status of *je*. However, even if it were applicable, it is still doubtful whether the test would diagnose semantic markedness.

Looking again at (20), what is shown is that the verb agrees with the masculine DP, but is not clear that this agreement relates to semantic markedness. It could just as well be the result of a morpho-syntactic markedness relation between masculine and feminine features. Since there is no reason to assume that for Czech gender morpho-syntactic and semantic markedness relations are reverse, the dominance test indicates semantic unmarkedness of masculine as well, but in the domain of Dutch 1st and 2nd person pronouns, these markedness

⁵ At least in Dutch. See Zobel (this volume) where it is shown that this is actually possible in some Austrian German varieties.

⁶ Example taken from Sauerland (2008).

⁷ However, as Sauerland points out, these facts diagnose semantic markedness only on the basis of an underlying assumption that the denotation of feminine inflection would be that *all* members of the reference set are female.

relations are reverse. This renders the dominance test inconclusive for 1st and 2nd person singular in the first place.

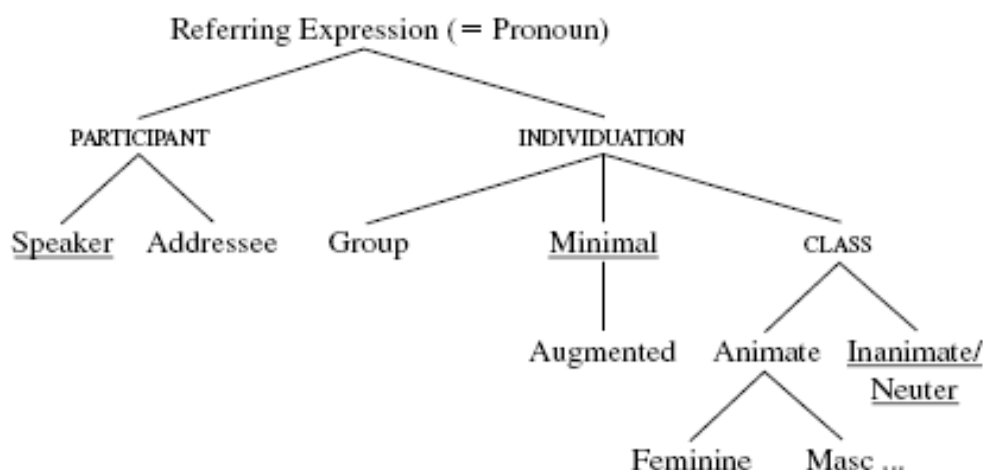
3. Analysis

Now that it is established that Dutch *je* is unmarked w.r.t. 1st person singular pronouns, the question arises as to what underlies this markedness relation. I adopt Sauerland's proposal that categorical markedness reflects asymmetric feature composition. In 3.1, I outline how a slight modification of Sauerland's proposal accounts for all semantic markedness effects described above. In 3.2, I demonstrate how this proposal applies to the Dutch 1st and 2nd person pronouns and I explain why *je* can be used to refer to the speaker only and how consequently the usage conditions for this self-referring *je* arise.

3.1 *Markedness, feature geometry and maximize presupposition*

Harley & Ritter (2002) argue that pronominal features stand in a feature-geometrical relation as in (22).

(22) Harley & Ritter's (2002: 486) proposal for the feature geometry underlying pronouns:



According to this hierarchy, both speaker and addressee pronouns share a particular feature [PARTICIPANT] ([PART] henceforward). Note that these features stand in an entailment relation. If some element carries a feature [SPEAKER] it also carries a feature [PARTICIPANT], but not necessarily the other way round.

For Sauerland it is this entailment relation that underlies semantic markedness. In short, his account of semantic markedness amounts to the following criterion:

(23) A Lexical Item A is marked w.r.t. Lexical Item B iff
 $\{f \mid f \text{ is a semantic feature of B}\} \subset \{g \mid g \text{ is a semantic feature of A}\}$

That is, two elements stand in a semantic markedness relation if the set of semantic features one element is composed of forms a strict subset of the set of features that the other element carries. For example, in Dutch both masculine and feminine pronouns consist of [INDIVIDUATION], [CLASS] and [ANIMATE] features. However, *zij* ('she') also contains

a feature [FEMININE], whereas *hij* ('he') is lacking a corresponding feature [MASCULINE].

These assumptions already naturally capture the observations made above for feminine pronouns. Under the assumption that semantic ϕ -features are interpreted as presuppositions on their reference sets, *zij* presupposes that its referent is always female. This analysis also accounts for the observation that a masculine pronoun like *hij* does not presuppose that its referent is always masculine. If *hij* is lacking a feature [MASCULINE], it is predicted not to refer to males only.

However, the analysis so far is still too weak, since most often masculine pronouns (the name is actually is misnomer now) are still quite often felt to refer to a males only. To show this, suppose that some person overhears a conversation like (24).

- (24) Q. Waaron is Anne niet hier?
 Why is Anne not here
 'Why isn't Anne here?'
 A. Hij is ziek.
 He is ill
 'He's ill'

Although the Dutch name *Anne* can be used both for males and females, the (over)hearer will undoubtedly understand that this Anne is a male. This does not follow from the analysis presented above so far.

In order to solve these kinds of problems, Sauerland alludes to the Principle of Maximize Presupposition (cf. Heim 1991, Ippolito 2003, Sauerland 2003, 2008, Percus 2006 a.o.), which informally states that speakers presuppose as much as possible in their contribution to the conversation. There are several formal versions of this principle, of which I list two below:

- (25) Maximize Presupposition: If $\text{domain}(\psi)$ entails $\text{domain}(\phi)$, ψ is a scalar alternative of ϕ , and ψ and ϕ are equivalent, assertion of ϕ entails that the speaker doesn't believe $\text{domain}(\psi)$ to be entailed by the common ground (cf. Heim 1991, see also Sauerland 2008).
- (26) Implicated Presupposition: If a scalar alternative Y of X has more or stronger inherent presuppositions than X , X presupposes that the inherent presuppositions of Y aren't satisfied (cf. Ippolito 2003).

Both versions state that by not choosing a stronger alternative it can be inferred that the speaker does not believe that the sentence containing the stronger alternative is true. In the example in (24), it may thus be inferred that the presuppositions of the stronger alternative (27) are not met.

- (27) *Zij* is ziek.
 She is ill
 'She isn't ill'

In order to meet the presupposition of (27) the speaker must take *zij* to refer to a female pronoun. Since, it follows that the speaker does not believe that Anne is a female, and at the same time knows who Anne is, it can safely be inferred that Anne is a male.

However, a caveat must be made here. Take example (16) discussed in 2.3, repeated as (28) below:

- (28) a. Een student heb ik betrapt op spieken. Hij heeft een 1 gekregen
 One student have I caught on cheating. He has a 1 got
 ‘I caught one student cheating. He got a 1 (i.e. the lowest grade possible)’
 b. Een student heb ik betrapt op spieken. Zij heeft een 1 gekregen
 One student have I caught on cheating. She has a 1 got
 ‘I caught one student cheating. She got a 1 (i.e. the lowest grade possible)’

If the speaker chooses to utter (28)a to avoid revealing that the cheating student was a female, it cannot be that the speaker does not believe that (28)b is not entailed by the common ground or that the speaker presupposes that the inherent presuppositions of (28)b are not satisfied. What appears to be the case is that the speaker utters a weaker statement because he deliberately chooses not to be maximally informative.

For this reason, I tentatively suggest to modify Heim’s original version along the following lines:

- (29) Maximize Presupposition (modified): If $\text{domain}(\psi)$ entails $\text{domain}(\phi)$, ψ is a scalar alternative of ϕ , and ψ and ϕ are equivalent, assertion of ϕ entails that the speaker doesn’t believe $\text{domain}(\psi)$ to *make a felicitous contribution to the conversation*.

This modification slightly weakens the original versions of Maximize Presupposition in the sense that other motivations than disbelief may be a reason not to be maximally informative. I am not claiming, though, that (29) is the only correct way to reformulate, though. However, the fact that other motivations than disbelief play a role in selecting alternatives of certain expression must be captured somehow, given that in all the examples in section 2.3 the speaker is actually committed to the truth of the blocked examples.

3.2 An account of speaker-referring *je*

Given the discussion above, I propose that whereas both *ik* and *je* contain a feature [PART], *ik* contains an additional feature [SPEAKER].⁸ *Je*, by contrast, lacks a feature [ADDRESSEE]. Then it follows directly that *je* is semantically unmarked w.r.t. *ik*. The presuppositions of [SPEAKER] and [PART] are listed below:

- (30) [SPEAKER]: presupposes that the referent is the speaker
 [PART]: presupposes that the referent is a participant of the conversation (i.e. either the speaker or the hearer)

Now, it already follows that *ik* always refers to the speaker. This is a direct consequence of its [SPEAKER] feature. In all cases where *je* clearly refers to the hearer, this must follow from Maximize Presupposition. In those cases the speaker takes the alternative with *ik* not to make a felicitous contribution to the conversation. To illustrate this, suppose that a speaker reports to the hearer about Marie’s phone call. If the speaker then utters (31) it can only be understood to mean that Marie wants to borrow a book owned by the hearer.

⁸ The analysis of *ik* extends to other 1st person pronouns such as *mij/me* (‘me’) and *mijn* (‘mine’). For the sake of exposition I talk only about *ik* in the remainder of this article.

- (31) Marie vroeg of ze een boek van je mocht lenen
 Marie asked whether she a book of you could borrow
 ‘Marie asked whether she could borrow a book of yours’

This means that the only type of contexts where *je* does not refer to the hearer are those cases where it is unclear to the speaker whether the referent of *je* is either the speaker or the hearer and where no other pronoun can be used (e.g. a 3rd person singular or 1st person plural pronoun). This accounts for all sentences discussed before where *je* is quantificationally bound or where the epistemic status of the reference of *je* is unclear to the speaker.

However, as mentioned in sections 1 and 2.3, these are not the only cases where *je* can refer to the speaker. In fact, instances of speaker-referring *je* generally occur in cases where the speaker knows that the referent of *je* is the speaker and not the hearer. Take again examples (18) and (19):

- (32) a. Andrew vroeg of je nog mee ging naar de bar en dan heb je ja gezegd ook al weet je dat je morgen vroeg op moet.
 Andrew asked whether you still PRT went to the pub and then have you yes said PRT PRT know you that you tomorrow early up must
 ‘Andrew asked whether you’d join to the pub and then you said yes, although you know you have to get up early tomorrow’
 b. Andrew vroeg of ik nog mee ging naar de bar en toen heb ik ja gezegd ook al weet ik dat ik morgen vroeg op moet.
 Andrew asked whether I still PRT went to the pub and then have I yes said PRT PRT know I that I tomorrow early up must
 ‘Andrew asked whether I’d join to the pub and then I said yes, although I knew I had to get up early tomorrow’
- (33) a. Ja, je bent er mee geboren en dan kun je die derde hand net zo goed gebruiken
 Yes, you are PRT with born and then can you that third hand just as well use
 ‘Well, you were born with it, so you may just as well use it’
 b. Ja, ik werd er mee geboren en dan kan ik die derde hand net zo goed gebruiken
 Yes, I am PRT with born and then can you that third hand just as well use
 ‘Well, I was born with it, so I may just as well use it’

In both cases the speaker must actually be committed to the truth of the b-examples, but still prefers the a-examples. The question thus arises how according to the analysis described above, the a-examples can be understood to be about the speaker only.

Maximize Presupposition requires that by uttering an a-example, the speaker does not believe that the alternative b-example makes a felicitous contribution to the conversation (along the lines of (29)). However, since the reference of both *je* in the a-examples and *je* in the b-examples is identical, it is at face value unclear why the b-example could not make a felicitous contribution to the conversation.

However, this is only the cases when the sentences are taken to hold for the actual world. Once counterfactual interpretations are taken into account as well, things radically differ.

The b-examples presuppose that the referent of the subject is the speaker, regardless whether this applies to the real world or any other possible world. The only worlds that can be taken into considerations are exactly those where *ik* refers to the speaker as well (as shown

in (34) for a small toy model consisting of four possible worlds), i.e. alternative situations where the speaker still acts as the referent of the sentence.

(34) Evaluation of the reference of *ik* against a set of possible worlds:

	<i>Ik</i> refers to	
W ₀	Speaker	
W ₁	Speaker	
W ₂	Speaker	
W ₃	Speaker	

However, for the b-examples it is only presupposed that the referent of *je* is a participant of the conversation. That means that even though *je* refers to the speaker in the actual world, in counterfactual interpretations the referent of *je* can be both the speaker and the hearer. This is shown in the toy model in (35).

(35) Evaluation of the reference of *je* against a set of possible worlds:

	<i>Je</i> refers to	
W ₀	Speaker	
W ₁ '		Hearer
W ₂ '	Speaker	
W ₃ '	Speaker	Hearer

Applying this to (32)a, this means that in all worlds where Andrew invited the speaker or the hearer for a drink, this participant accepted the invitation. From the context it follows that it was the speaker in the actual world, but that in all situations where the hearer would be in the same situation, the hearer would do the same thing. This is exactly the message that the a-example, but crucially not the b-example, conveys. In the b-examples also in other worlds it would still be the speaker who was the willing invitee.

Note that this implicature that states that the hearer would do the same if he were in the speaker's situation must arise as a result of Maximized Presupposition. If alternatives worlds are not taken into consideration, nothing blocks the usage of *je* instead of *ik* and Maximized Presupposition rules out the usage of speaker-referring *je*. Therefore this additional implicature must always show up, even in cases that appear to be non-modal in nature, such as episodic sentences. Thus, even in examples like (3) (repeated below), the utterance conveys that the addressee would have done the same thing on the football field, which is exactly the interpretation that such sentences are felt to have.

(36) Je kreeg de bal van Huntelaar en toen schoot je op het doel
 You got the ball from Huntelaar and then you targeted on the goal
 'I got the ball from Huntelaar and then I targeted on the goal'

Deictic *je* can be used in two ways: either it refers to the hearer only or it refers to the speaker, but then other worlds must be taken into consideration where it refers to the speaker or the hearer. Therefore, in situations where *je* is used to refer to the speaker, it comes along with an implicature that in counterfactual worlds the hearer could be the referent instead of the speaker.

4. On the impersonal usage of 2nd person pronouns

In this section I discuss another property of Dutch *je*, already briefly hinted upon in section 1, namely its property to yield impersonal/generic readings. In 4.1, I demonstrate that synchronically instances of speaker-referring *je* are not subcases of impersonal/generic readings induced by *je*. In 4.2, I conjecture that diachronically the emergence of impersonally referring *je* did set the stage, though, for *je* to be reanalysed as a carrier of a sole [PART] feature, which consequently enables *je* to refer to the speaker only.

4.1 Impersonal/generic *je* and speaker-referring *je*

One of the immediate questions that arise concerns the behaviour of Dutch *je* in non-episodic constructions, i.e. when alternative worlds or situations are obligatorily quantified over. The two modals domains that then need to be taken into considerations are constructions with modal auxiliaries and conditionals.

Concerning the first domain, the behaviour of Dutch *je* does not seem to deviate from its behaviour in episodic constructions. Take for instance :

- (37) a. Je mag een koekje pakken
You may a cookie take
'You may take a cookie'
b. Je moet nu gaan
You must now go
'You must go now'

Both sentences in (37) are ambiguous between a (preferred) hearer-only interpretation (i.e. the hearer is allowed to take a cookie or forced to leave) and an interpretation with speaker-referring *je*, if the hearer-only reading is contextually ruled out: the sentence then denotes that the speaker is allowed to take a cookie / forced to leave but that the hearer would be allowed to take a cookie / forced to leave when the hearer would be in the situation that the speaker is in.

Both readings are expected to arise. For instance, (37)a, for instance, states that in at least one possible world accessible from the real world the participant takes a cookie, but at the same time, (38) is not taken to make a felicitous contribution to the conversation: it is not believed by the speaker that in at least one possible world accessible from the real world the speaker takes a cookie. Hence, the hearer-only reading is expected to surface.

- (38) Ik mag een koekje pakken
I may a cookie take
'I may take a cookie'

At the same time, this hearer-only interpretation of (37)a disappears if the existential modal proposition is evaluated against alternative worlds as well. Then it is conveyed, fully analogously to the examples discussed in section 3.2, that in the actual world the speaker is allowed to take a cookie, provided that in all alternative worlds, there is an accessible world where the participant takes a cookie too, be it the hearer or the speaker. This is indeed an alternative reading for a(37). Mutatis mutandis the same applies to (37)b.

Things are, however, different in conditionals, as is shown in (39).

- (39) Als je ziek bent, moet je thuis blijven
 If you are ill, must you stay at home
 ‘If you are ill, you must stay at home’

The conditional in (39) can easily receive a hearer or speaker-only interpretation, but, just like its English translation, it (perhaps even more saliently) may also receive an impersonal, generic reading, relatively similar to the impersonal or indefinite examples in (40).

- (40) a. If one is ill, one must stay home
 b. If anybody is ill, he must stay home

Usage of the 2nd person pronoun to yield an impersonal/generic reading in non-episodic contexts, such as conditionals, is very common across languages. In fact, most Germanic, Romance and Slavic languages, but also many languages outside the Indo-European language family exhibit this phenomenon.

Note that for those languages, to the extent that it has been investigated, the semantic behaviour of impersonal 2nd person pronouns and that of plain impersonals is deviant. Malamud (2005, 2006), for instance, lists a number of differences between English *one* and impersonal *you*. For instance, impersonal *you* invokes some kind of empathy, which *one* is lacking, as is shown in (41), where empathy is felt with the jailed one, not with the jailer.:

- (41) In those days, one could throw you in jail for this kind of thing⁹

Another difference between the impersonal usage of the 2nd person *you* and the impersonal pronoun *one* concerns speaker inclusion to the set of possible referents. Take (42).

- (42) a. One may not smoke in here, but of course YOU may
 b. *You may not smoke in here, but of course YOU may

In (42)a the hearer can form an exception to the general rule that smoking is prohibited; in (42)b this is impossible. Note that these facts naturally extend to Dutch as well (where the emphatic pronoun *jij* is used for the second occurrence of ‘you’):

- (43) In die dagen kon men je in de gevangenis gooien voor zoiets
 In those days could one you in the prison throw for so.something
 ‘In those days, one could throw you in jail for this kind of thing’
- (44) a. Men mag hier niet roken, maar jij natuurlijk wel
 One may here not smoke, but you of.course PRT
 ‘One may not smoke in here, but of course you may’
 b. *Je mag hier niet roken maar jij natuurlijk wel
 You may here not smoke, but you of.course PRT
 ‘You may not smoke in here, but of course you may’

What the English and Dutch examples show is that the generic/impersonal usage of *you/je* always seem to involve some (indirect) reference to the hearer, which the plain impersonal pronouns are lacking. This entails that the generic/impersonal usage of *you/je* should follow from their 2nd person properties (thus ruling out a treatment of generic/impersonal usage of

⁹ Example taken from Malamud 2006: 9

you/je in terms of lexical ambiguity). Several attempts have been proposed in order to do. Malamud (2006) argues for a ‘body and soul’ analysis of generic *you* where it refers to an individual ‘whose shell is inhabited by the addressee’s self.’ Others take 2nd person singular to be upward entailing so that its set of reference at least includes the hearer (cf. Sauerland 2008).

Focusing on the generic usage of 2nd person pronouns, it follows that, like every generic, a contextually restricted set of individuals is quantified over. Crucially, the generic/impersonal examples above do not apply to any possible human being. In fact, the set of reference of the impersonally referring pronoun can be contextually restricted to smaller sets, even to a singleton set, so that the sentence is understood to apply to the speaker. As has been shown by Kratzer (1997), Egerland (2003), Molltman (2006), impersonal pronouns such as German *man*. Swedish *man* and English *one* may be used in a situation where they clearly refer to the speaker the hearer or a 3rd person. Their examples, the first two also present in Tarenskeen (2010), are in (45).

- (45) a. Es war völlig klar dass man sich nie nehr wiedersehen würde
It was completely clear that one SE never again.see would
‘It was comeplet clear that one wouldn’t see each other again’
- b. Man blir besviken
One was disppaointed
‘One was disappointed’
- c. The tailor knows what to wear at one’s own wedding

However, this is not the case for 2nd person pronouns: English *you* and German *Du*, if impersonally used, must always involve reference to the hearer as well, contrary to the examples in (45).

- (46) a. Es war völlig klar dass Du dich nie mehr höhren würdest
It was completely clear that you SE never hear would
‘It was completely clear that you wouldn’t hear youerself again’
- b. The tailor knows what to wear at your own wedding

A requirement for impersonal 2nd person pronouns is that the contextually restricted set of reference of the individuals bound by the generic quantifier minimally involves the hearer.

The question that arises now is whether self-referring *je* in Dutch can be taken to be an instance of impersonal/generic *je* that is contextually restricted to the speaker only. In a way, this is the stand that Tarenskeen (2010) argues for. For her, *je* presupposes reference to at least an imaginary hearer and if this imaginary hearer is present, *je* can be used impersonally in such a way that the domain of generic quantification is contextually restricted to the speaker and this imaginary reader only. The pronoun then refers to the speaker and the imaginary hearer then invited to sympathize with the speaker.

Tarenskeen’s analysis thus takes the minimal contribution of *je* to be either to presuppose reference to the hearer (in its deictic usage) or reference to a contextually restricted set that minimally involves an imaginary addressee (in its impersonal usage). However, I see two basic problems with this approach. First, it is not clear what the exact semantic representation of *je* is, such that it can presuppose such an imaginary hearer, except for just postulating it. The way the two usages are defined Tarenskeen’s account, is that they must be the result of lexical ambiguity of Dutch *je*: the semantic representation of deictic *je* must be different from impersonal *je*. Also, it remains unclear how this alleged imaginary hearer makes that sentences containing self-referring *je* are actually interpreted in such a way

that the message is conveyed that the *real* hearer would have done something similar were the hearer the speaker.

Second, if speaker-referring *je* is indeed a special instance of impersonal/generic *je*, in principle every impersonally referring 2nd person pronoun should then be able to invoke speaker-referring readings. This, however, turns out not to be the case. Both English and German ban instances of speaker-referring 2nd person pronouns. For English, the reader can confirm this by looking at all translations of the Dutch examples containing speaker-referring *je*, where the translation with *you* does not yield reference to the speaker only.¹⁰ German also lacks speaker-referring 2nd pronouns too, even though German is a language that allows its 2nd person singular pronoun to express impersonal readings in conditionals as well:

- (47) Wenn Du krank bist, solltest Du zu Hause bleiben
 If you are ill, must you at home stay
 ‘If you are ill, you must stay at home’

However, as the following examples indicate, German *Du* cannot be bound by a coordination meaning ‘you and me’ (48), it cannot refer to either the hearer or the speaker under epistemic uncertainty (49) and it cannot behave like Dutch speaker-referring *je* in terms of taking *Du* to refer to the speaker or the hearer in counterfactual situations (50)-(52). In all these examples it is presupposed that *Du* refers to the hearer only. None of the examples below is fine with a bound variable or speaker-referring interpretation.

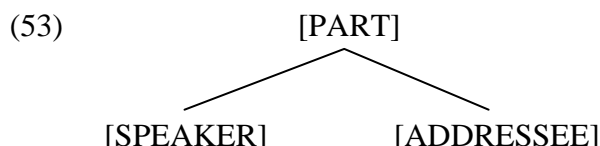
- (48) Der Vorstand hat dir und mir beide gebeten ob Du den Namen des neuen Rektors geheimhalten kannst
 The staff has asked you and me both whether you the name of the new director s ecret.keep can
 ‘The staff has asked you and me whether you could keep the name of the new director a secret’
- (49) Wenn Du ein rotes Kreuz bekommst, gewinnst Du
 If you get a red ace, you win
 ‘Whoever gets the red ace, will win the game’
- (50) Andrew fragte, ob du noch mit in die Kneipe kommst, und dann hast du ja gesagt, obwohl du schon weißt, dass du morgen früh aufstehen musst
 Andrew asked whether you still PRT to the pub go and then have you yes said although you know that you tomorrow early get.up must
 ‘Andrew asked whether you’d join to the pub and then you said yes, although you know you have to get up early tomorrow’
- (51) Ja, du bist damit geboren worden und dann kannst du die dritte Hand genau so gut gebrauchen.
 Yes, you are therewith born and then can you that third hand just as well use
 ‘Well, you were born with it, so you may just as well use it’

¹⁰ Tarenskeen (2010: 77) reports an example from Hyman (2004) that is taken to evidence speaker-referring *you*. However, this example is not conclusive as the clause containing *you* can be analyzed as reported speech/though.

- (i) When I got [to Oxford] I think the first thing I learned was that for the first time in my life you were totally divorced from your background.

- (52) Ohne Religion kannst Du nicht funktionieren
 Without religion can you not function
 ‘You can’t function without religion’

The two problems for Tarenskeen vanish under the account that I proposed in section 3. In section 3 it was demonstrated that languages have a choice in the featural specificity of speaker and hearer pronouns. Take again the relevant piece of the feature geometry by Harley & Ritter (2002):



Suppose it is the 1st person pronoun that carries the feature [SPEAKER]. Then 2nd person pronouns could either carry the feature [PART] and [ADDRESSEE] or the feature [PART] only. Dutch *je* is an example of the latter, but is predicted that in other languages the 2nd person pronoun may carry a feature [ADDRESSEE] and as a consequence lack speaker-reference.¹¹ German is exactly such a language. The examples (48)-(52) show that German *Du*, contrary to Dutch *je*, cannot be analysed as solely carrying a [PART] feature. I take these data to indicate that German *Du* is a ‘true’ 2nd person in the sense that it always minimally refers to the hearer. The difference between Dutch and German in this respect thus nicely reflects the possible variation that the feature geometrical space constitutes.

A prediction that follows is that in principle impersonal usages of Dutch *je* should receive an interpretation where they refer to the speaker only as well. The presupposition of its impersonal usage is that it minimally refers to a participant of the conversation. The Dutch translations of the examples in (46) are fine with speaker reference of *je* only, as is expected.

- (54) a. Het was volledig duidelijk dat je jezelf niet meer zou kunnen horen
 It was completely clear that you yourself not more would can hear
 ‘It was completely clear that you couldn’t hear yourself anymore’
 b. Een kleermaker weet wat je op je eigen bruiloft draagt
 A tailor knows what to wear at your own wedding
 ‘A tailor knows what to wear at one own’s wedding’

Also, as demonstrated in section 3, the proposed analysis of *je* naturally accounts for the felt empathy with the hearer in cases of speaker-referring *je*. This effect is simply derived as a pragmatic result of *je*’s featural underspecification and it is not necessary to allude to any further postulations.

What appears to be the minimal requirement for impersonal usages of 2nd person pronouns is that they carry at least a feature [PART]. Languages may then further vary whether, additionally, these pronouns carry a feature [SPEAKER] as well.

It remains a question for future research to investigate the referential properties of 2nd person pronouns in other languages. Tarenskeen (2010) reports examples where French, Finnish and Modern Hebrew 2nd person pronouns have speaker-referring properties too, but

¹¹ Note that nothing rules out a language where the 1st person pronoun would only carry a feature [PART] and where 2nd person pronouns always carry [PART] and [ADDRESSEE]. I am not aware of languages that behave like that, though.

the exact nature of these speaker-referring properties have not been analyzed as of yet. It needs to be investigated, though, whether these pronouns carry a [PART] feature only or whether something else is at stake.

4.2 *Speaker-referring je as a diachronic side-effect of the loss of men*

I take the facts described above to indicate that speaker-referring *je* is not a special subcase of its impersonal/generic usage. The possibility of a 2nd person pronoun to yield impersonal readings does not necessarily enable the pronoun to exhibit speaker-referring properties as well. At the same time, the semantic correspondence between impersonal and speaker-referring *je* does not appear to be coincidental. Also, what is striking is that the emergence of speaker-referring *je* seems to have diachronically followed the emergence of impersonal usages of *je*. In this subsection I argue that the emergence of speaker-referring *je*, is not a direct consequence of the emergence of impersonal reading's invoked by *je*, but rather that what caused this emergence of impersonal usages of *je*, namely the disappearance of the impersonal pronoun *men* from colloquial speech, also triggered a reanalysis of the featural composition of *je*.

Following Weerman (2006), 20th century Dutch underwent a dramatic change in terms of its pronominal devices to express arbitrary reference. Weerman shows, basing himself on Klaasse (2005), that in the late 19th century usage of the impersonal pronoun *men* was the main strategy to express arbitrary reference: 88% of all instances of pronominal arbitrary reference involved *men*. Towards the end of the 20th century this percentage has decreased to 17%. In more than 50% of all instances of pronominal arbitrary reference, *je* is being used. It appears that *men* is on its way of becoming extinct, and only shows up in archaic or formal registers. For Weerman, this is confirmed by two other facts: *men* hardly ever occurs in spoken language (its relative frequency being less than 1/1000 in Uit den Bogaart 1975) and *men* is also completely absent from child language, where *je* shows up as the plain marker for arbitrary reference.

Regardless of the exact causes of this change, which for Weerman are due to *men*'s deviant morphosyntactic properties in Dutch (*men*, for instance, lacks an object form), it can safely be said that *je* took over the role of *men*, which like any plain impersonal pronoun, could have its set of reference to be contextually restricted to a singleton set, which might even be just the speaker.

The disappearance of *men*, consequently, caused a reanalysis in the feature specification for Dutch *je*. In previous stages of the language, where *je* was primarily used to refer to (at least) the hearer, speakers had natural cues to assign both [PART] and [ADDRESSEE] to *je*.

However, after *men* started to disappear and *je* took over as the main expresser of arbitrarily pronominal reference, language learners had to assign features to *je* that enabled *je* to function both as a deictic 2nd person marker and as an expresser of arbitrary reference. With respect to the first, although it was still possible for language learners to hypothesize [SPEAKER] to be part of the features of *je*, nothing speaks in favour of it either and learners might actually assign only [PART] to *je*. However, once certain speakers had a pronoun *je* at their disposal that carries [PART] only, a new way of self-reference was already invoked: speaker-referring *je*. This way of course had certain advantages as speaker-referring *je* lent itself perfectly to express suggestions of self-defence or modesty, which in the previous stage of the language had to be uttered by means of *men*. Thus in the initial stage of *men* deletion already some speakers were able to use *je* for speaker reference only.

However, once speakers started to use speaker-referring *je*, this provided more and (more importantly) conclusive evidence that *je* actually might not consist of a feature

[ADDRESSEE]. Otherwise, speaker-referring *je* would be impossible to account for. From this time onward, all language learners had to assign a [PART] feature only to *je*. This rendered the change complete.

Thus it is *men* deletion that, indirectly, triggered *je* to drop its [ADDRESSEE] feature in the course of the 20th century.

5. Conclusions

In this article I demonstrate that the Dutch weak 2nd person singular pronoun *je* can be used in cases where it refers to the speaker only, with an implicature that the hearer would have done the same thing in that situation as well.

I argue that this rather striking phenomenon is due to the fact that Dutch *je* stands in a semantic markedness relation to Dutch 1st person singular pronoun *ik*, much in the same way as the masculine 3rd person singular pronoun *hij* ('he') stands in a semantic markedness relation to its feminine counterpart *zij* ('she').

I follow Sauerland (2008) by assuming that semantic markedness results from asymmetric feature composition: A Lexical Item A is semantically marked w.r.t. Lexical Item B if and only if the set of semantic features A consist of is a strict subset of the set of semantic features of B.

Under this approach I take *ik* to carry a feature [PART], which presupposes reference to any participant in the conversation, and a feature [SPEAKER], which presupposes reference to the speaker only; *je* is only taken to carry a feature [PART]. This asymmetric featural composition, in accordance with the Principle of Maximize Presupposition, slightly reformulated as (55), then enables *je* to refer to the speaker only provided that it comes along with an implicature that states that in alternative worlds the pronoun refers to the speaker or the hearer.

- (55) Maximize Presupposition (modified): If $\text{domain}(\psi)$ entails $\text{domain}(\phi)$, ψ is a scalar alternative of ϕ , and ψ and ϕ are equivalent, assertion of ϕ entails that the speaker doesn't believe $\text{domain}(\psi)$ to *make a felicitous contribution to the conversation*.

Concretely, this amounts to saying that a sentence containing speaker-referring *je* must come along with an implicature that states if the hearer were in the speaker situation, he would have done the same thing. It is exactly this interpretation that these examples with speaker-referring *je* exhibit.

In the remainder of this article I demonstrate that speaker-referring *je* is qualitatively different from the impersonal readings that 2nd person pronouns may generally invoke, by showing that only a subset of the languages that allow 2nd person pronouns to yield impersonal/generic readings also allows readings where the 2nd person pronoun can refer to the speaker only. This then naturally follows from the fact that opposite lexical items (such as 1st and 2nd person pronouns) can either stand in a feature-geometrical motherhood or sisterhood relation and that languages vary w.r.t. these feature-geometrical relations between their 1st and 2nd person pronouns. Only if the 2nd person pronoun is the mother of the 1st person, 2nd person pronouns may refer to the speaker too.

Finally, I argue that even though speaker-referring *je* is qualitatively different from the impersonal reading that *je* may yield, it is the sudden emergence in the 20th century of *je* as the main expresser of pronominal arbitrary reference (as a result of the deletion of the original impersonal pronoun *men*) that triggered *je*, originally carrying [PART] and [ADDRESSEE], to lose its [ADDRESSEE] feature and consequently to allow for speaker reference only.

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