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## Space, size, and ‘you’: motivations for Polish pronouns of address

When people speak to one another, they categorize their relationship linguistically. In many languages, this categorization is reflected by means of the pronominal system. For example, there are at least eighteen different ways to say “you were” in Polish<sup>1</sup>, with each construction (here, pronoun and past tense verb) encoding factors concerning the addressee (such as gender, number, perceived status, and so on.) This fact is quite significant when one considers that in other Slavic languages there are generally considerably fewer options that could be considered the equivalent of this one English phrase.

The Polish pronouns are as follows, with the address pronouns in boldface:

	<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>
1	JA	MY
2	<b>TY</b>	<b>WY</b>
3	<b>PAN, PANI</b>	<b>PANOWIE, PANIE,</b> <b>PAŃSTWO</b>
	ON, ONA, ONO	ONI, ONE

**Table 1: Polish pronouns**

Singular pronouns of address include *ty*, *wy* (which is also 2pl and has restricted use in Polish as a singular pronoun), *pan*, and *pani*. *Pan*, which is often considered the equivalent of English ‘sir’, and *pani*, which is similarly ‘madam’, are not the neutral 3sg pronouns of reference. Polish also has *on* ‘he’, *ona* ‘she’ and *ono* ‘it’. *Pan* and *pani* are generally classified as nouns that function as pronouns in the addressing function.

Plural pronouns of address include *wy*, *panowie* (which is the plural of *pan*), *panie* (the plural of *pani*), and *państwo* (a mixed-gender collective). Again, there are other pronouns used to refer to a third person: *oni* ‘they, masculine animate’ and *one*

‘they, masculine inanimate; feminine or neuter’. In addition to the pronouns proper, there are several nouns, such as *ojciec* ‘father’, *siostra* ‘sister’, *świadek* ‘witness’, that are used as pronouns in much the same way as *pan/pani*. Polish is a null-subject language; thus, my use of the term ‘pronoun’ usually implies not only the pronoun proper but also its associated forms (verb, modifiers, and so on). *Pan, pani* and their corresponding plural forms, however, are always obligatory and cannot be dropped in the addressing function.

In categorizing addressees, I propose that Poles use embodied knowledge of the world around them. I suggest that this complex system of address has developed in Polish due to the prominence of *space* and *size* in structuring pronoun use in the addressing function. Polish speakers *conceptualize* relationships (and assign pronouns accordingly) in terms of physical orientation and distance. I will evidence supporting this claim from both the semantics of the pronouns themselves as well as from the physical actions of speakers in the movie *Człowiek z marmuru*.

In their recent *Philosophy in the flesh*, Lakoff and Johnson suggest, “Spatial-relations are at the heart of our conceptual system. They are what make sense of space for us. They characterize what spatial form is and define spatial inference” (1999:30). *Metaphor* is the mechanism that “allows conventional mental imagery from sensorimotor domains to be used for domains of subjective experience”(Lakoff and Johnson 1999:45); that is, humans conceptualize subjective judgements, such as a good or bad mood, in terms of sensorimotor experience (such as verticality or movement up and down). Human perceptions of space and spatial orientations are common sources for metaphorical language use. For example, English, Russian, Czech, and Polish all make use of orientational metaphors, which give a concept a spatial orientation (UP/DOWN, IN/OUT and so on) and include the metaphors GOOD IS UP, DOWN IS BAD: in Russian the expression “*nastroenie podnjalos*” ‘mood *rose*’ can be used to indicate that one is in a *better* mood. In Czech the expression “*hluboko klesnout*” ‘to *sink* very *low*’ has similar metaphorical meaning to its English equivalent; it can be used to describe *bad* behavior. In Polish one might want to “*podnieść kogoś z upadku*” ‘*lift/raise* someone out of ruin’. Each of these expressions, in each of these languages, is coherent with the notion that GOOD IS UP and DOWN IS BAD.

Lakoff and Johnson describe other “primary metaphors” which are relevant to the study of polite pronouns. For instance, the metaphor INTIMACY IS CLOSENESS is an important motivation for the use of pronouns of address. Lakoff and Johnson suggest that the subjective experience ‘intimacy’ is conceptualized in terms of the sensorimotor experience ‘being located physically close to’; this mapping is derived from our primary experience of being physically close to people you are intimate with (mothers, fathers, husbands, and so on). Other relevant metaphors include IMPORTANT IS BIG and thus UNIMPORTANT IS SMALL, MORE IS UP, thus LESS IS DOWN, SIMILARITY IS CLOSENESS, thus DIFFERENCE IS DISTANCE (Lakoff and Johnson 1999: 50-51).

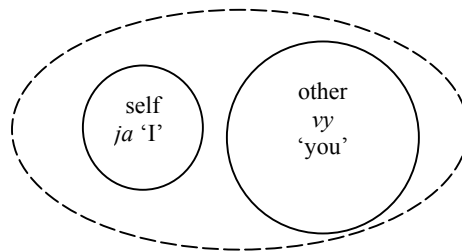
Speakers of many languages **commonly** use *space* and *spatial orientations* to categorize interlocutors; according to Inchaurrealde (1997: 135), a “speaker identifies certain regions of space as his/her own, and he/she feels attached to or detached from them in different degrees. Regions of space can be attached to the hearer (second person) or to other people in the background (third person).” He further notes, “interpersonal reference can be considered as an extension of physical space reference. Each participant has been assigned a certain space, and personal spaces are referred to by means of personal pronouns” (Inchaurrealde 1997:140).

Relative size is also important; the spaces represented by pronouns and pronominal constructions are of varying sizes on a human scale. That is, since knowledge is embodied, speakers assign the self- (*ja* ‘I-’) space a human size; other-spaces can be the same size or relatively larger or smaller. Further, as humans, we have a tendency to want to increase our personal space; this “has as a consequence the fact that other entities may get into it, provided they are ‘small’ enough to do so” (Inchaurrealde 1997: 137). For example, *ty* ‘you sg familiar,’ traditionally regarded as the pronoun of “solidarity” (see Brown and Gilman 1960), can be viewed as a single space small enough to be located near or even within the realm of the *ja*-space. Other pronouns are assigned different spaces of various sizes; thus the focus of this paper is to establish which regions of space various pronouns and their predicates occupy, as well as to determine their relative sizes.

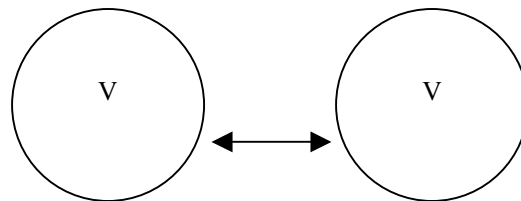
In the addressing function, Polish pronouns can be understood to be organized according to a basic *figure-ground* (or *self vs other*) schema. Thus we will explore

pronouns from the *ja/self* perspective (Diagram 1), rather than as an ‘outsider’ viewing the interaction from above (as with the traditional descriptions of “mutual T,” “mutual V,” “asymmetrical V,” and so on; see diagram 2.) Although conversations are never one-sided, I suggest it is important to look at the same conversation from the *ja*-perspective of *both* speakers because it will reveal insights into how the *individual* speaker categorizes an interlocutor linguistically. The situation might be depicted graphically as follows:

----- Interaction boundary  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Personal space boundary



**Diagram 1: View from within (self vs other)**



**Diagram 2: View from above (mutual V)**

For instance, linguists might traditionally analyze an interaction between a customer and waiter as a “mutual V” situation<sup>ii</sup>, meaning that each person addresses the other as 2pl *vy*, *vous* and so on. The conversation might be diagrammed as in Diagram 2: in terms of space and size, both V spaces are the same size and are some distance apart. However, from the perspective of each individual participating in the conversation, V is

inevitably bigger than *ja* (it is, after all, PLURAL)- even though from an outsider's perspective the two are the same size. I suggest, then, that to ignore the *ja* is to undertake too simple an analysis; perspective changes depending on who *ja* is and what relation *ja* has to the interlocutor.

Thus we will begin our exploration of Polish pronouns with the SELF pronouns: *ja* 'I' and *my* 'we'(see Table 2 below). *Ja* is assigned the following characteristics: it occupies a human-sized space; the occupier of a *ja*-space can let into or keep out of its space other things, depending on their size and if they will "fit". The occupier of this space can also gauge distance from other things, so that close things can be (but may not necessarily be) identified as being more like self; distant things cannot be identified as such and are generally assumed to be unlike self. Inchaurrealde (1997:136) suggests that the self-space also has the tendency to increase its size, to situate itself in the center and in the foreground, and to connect itself to as many other spaces as possible. As a consequence of these tendencies, other entities, if they are small enough, may get into the *ja*-space, and the *ja*- space will encounter and be forced to place and categorize many other spaces. The plural pronoun *my* 'we' occupies a space similar to that of *ja* 'I', and although it is bigger than *ja*, it has similar characteristics.

The pronouns designating non-self, or other persons, are the rest of the pronouns in the Polish system; they include *ty* 'you sg', *wy* 'you pl or you sg formal', *pan* 'sir', *pani* 'madam', *panowie* 'sirs', *panie* 'madams/ladies', and *państwo* 'ladies and gentlemen'. Also included here are a small group of nouns that function as pronouns, such as *ojciec* 'father', *wujek* 'uncle', *siostra* 'sister', and so on. The pronouns designating other persons have the following characteristics: These pronouns occupy space of various sizes, relative to human size; they are let in or kept out of the self space based on their size: small fits, but big does not. A proximate *other* can be (but doesn't necessarily have to be) identified as being more like self; distant things are difficult to identify and are generally assumed to be unlike self. Table 2 below summarizes the spatial characteristics of SELF and OTHER pronouns:

<i>SELF space</i>	<i>OTHER space</i>
<i>ja</i> 'I', <i>my</i> 'we'	all other pronouns
small space; human size	various sizes, relative to human size

<i>SELF space</i>	<i>OTHER space</i>
lets in or keeps out other things, depending on size (will they fit?)	is let in or is kept out of self-space based on size: small fits, big does not
gauges distance from other things	close things can be (but may not necessarily be) identified as being more like self; distant things cannot be identified as such and are generally assumed to be unlike self

**Table 2: SELF and OTHER spaces**

Let us look, in detail, at the various spaces and sizes of the primary Polish pronouns designating other persons, which for purposes of this paper will be limited to *ty*, *wy* singular and plural, *pan*, and *państwo*. Again, if we assume the pronoun *ja* to be of human size, the pronouns designating others are the same size, bigger or smaller relative to it. Table 3 below shows how the singular pronouns designating other persons in Polish occupy space. The examples listed are taken from two films (*Psy*, *Człowiek z Marmuru*).

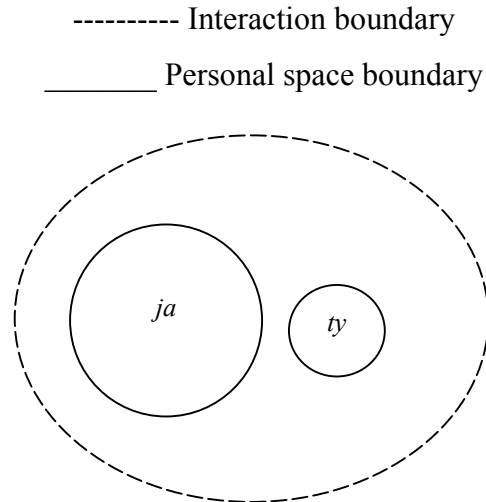
<i>pronoun</i>	<i>size and location relative to ja</i>	<i>motivating metaphors</i>
<i>ty</i> <i>A może po prostu sknocilaś ten film?</i> But maybe you simply <b>botched</b> [T] the film?	smallest and closest	INTIMACY IS CLOSENESS SIMILARITY IS CLOSENESS
<i>wy</i> <i>A co wyście robili do tej pory?</i> <i>Pracowaliście gdzieś?</i> But what <b>were you doing</b> [V] until now? <b>Were you working</b> [V] somewhere?	big, but close (the democratic pronoun)	IMPORTANT IS BIG MORE IS UP
<i>pan, pani + 2sg</i> <i>Za mało pan dałeś!</i>	small and distant, but not as distant as <i>pan + 3sg</i> (3 person	UNIMPORTANT IS SMALL

<i>pronoun</i>	<i>size and location relative to ja</i>	<i>motivating metaphors</i>
<b>You [P] gave [T] me too little!</b>	outside conversation, but 2 person predicate reduces size)	DIFFERENCE IS DISTANCE
<i>pan, pani + 3sg</i> <i>Panie Mauer, co <b>pan</b> zrobit w sprawie kapitana Nowakowskiego?</i> Mr. Mauer, what <b>did you [P]do [P] in the Captain Nowakowski affair?</b>	not small (lack of 2sg), and most distant (3 person subject and predicate completely outside conversation)	DIFFERENCE IS DISTANCE IMPORTANT IS BIG (or at least NOT SMALL)

**Table 3: Singular pronouns**

I suggest that *ty* ‘you sg’ (Diagram 3 below) occupies the smallest and closest space to the *ja*- space of all the pronouns designating other persons. *Ty* can be the same size as *ja* (*ja/ty* are, after all, considered to be “equals”). However, since *ja* also has a tendency to increase its space, if another object is to be included in the *ja*-space, it must be small enough and close enough to be identified as part of the self space (i.e., ‘most like self’). The notion that *ty*, the pronoun of intimacy and familiarity, is close to *ja* is supported by Lakoff and Johnson’s discussion of primary metaphors in *Philosophy in the flesh*: after all, INTIMACY IS CLOSENESS and SIMILARITY IS CLOSENESS. In the first example in the chart, a father is speaking to his daughter: *A może po prostu sknocilaś ten film?* The use of *ty* is, of course, appropriate because they are related, have a close relationship, and so on.

The ‘smallness’ that the space *ty* occupies parallels what Inchaurrealde suggests about diminutive behavior in many languages: if we feel close to an entity, we make it “enter our personal space by reducing its dimensions. We do not feel threatened by the object and, therefore, it is included as part of our private territory by making room in it” (1997: 138). Also, the metaphor LESS IS DOWN (or at least, LESS IS NOT UP) motivates *ty* as a small single space in several ways: for instance, when a speaker uses *ty* when another pronoun (*wy* or *pan*) is appropriate, the addressee is ‘belittled’. The addressee is let into the *ja*- space not for solidarity but for domination and control.

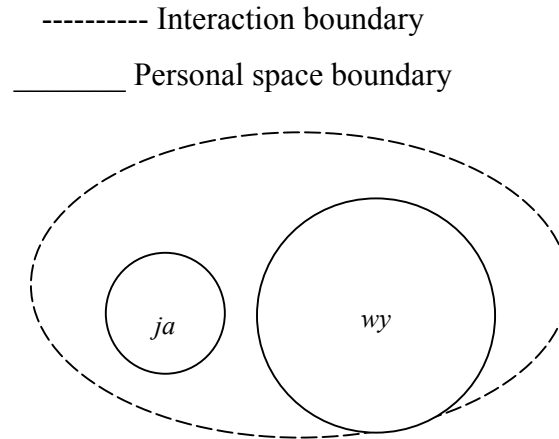


**Diagram 3: *ja* and *ty***

A slightly larger, but still relatively close, singular pronoun is *wy* ‘you formal’; it is also the 2pl pronoun but it is *not* used as the general polite pronoun in Polish. Gerald Stone notes that peasants use *wy* to address a single important member of their own community, but use *pan* to address outsiders from towns (and expect to be addressed as *pan* by them). *Wy* has also been used as an honorific pronoun at various times during the previous two centuries among certain groups (for instance, factory workers and students), and it was the official non-familiar pronoun of the Polish United Workers’ Party and the armed forces (Stone 1981: 63). Table 3 above gives an example of the use of this pronoun. In this case an interviewer is asking the shock worker Birkut, *A co wyście robili do tej pory? Pracowaliście gdzieś* ‘But what **were you doing** [V] until now? **Were you working** [V] somewhere?’ Birkut is an important fellow Communist, his space is made MORE (or plural), but as a Communist he is close and identifiable as ‘like’ other communists.

Second person, then, both singular and plural, represents a space proximate to *ja*. There is no (or little) distance involved in the use of *wy*; however, the space *wy* occupies, as a plural pronoun, is certainly bigger than the *ty*-space. Even though the addressee is in reality only one person, he is important enough to be assigned a large space. This notion is motivated by the primary metaphors IMPORTANT IS BIG and MORE IS UP, which is coherent with RESPECT IS UP.



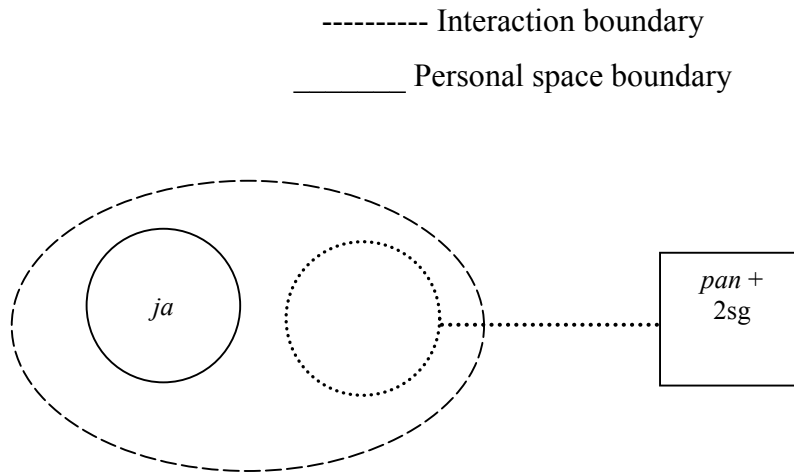


**Diagram 4: *ja* and *wy* (singular)**

This brings us to the polite pronoun in standard Polish: *pan* ‘sir’ and *pani* ‘madam’. Third person is always an indicator of distance, since the third person region of space is otherwise reserved for people outside a conversation. The metaphor DIFFERENCE IS DISTANCE motivates so-called ‘third-person address’; if *ja* is addressing an unknown or honored interlocutor, he or she metaphorically distances him from the conversation. Note, however, that *pan* and *pani* can take either a second person or third person predicate; the size of the space occupied by these pronouns and its proximity to the *ja*-space changes slightly depending on whether *pan* is accompanied by a 2sg predicate or the whole phrase is third person. Stone (1981:67) notes that this construction is less formal and reflects a greater degree of solidarity than *pan* + 3sg.

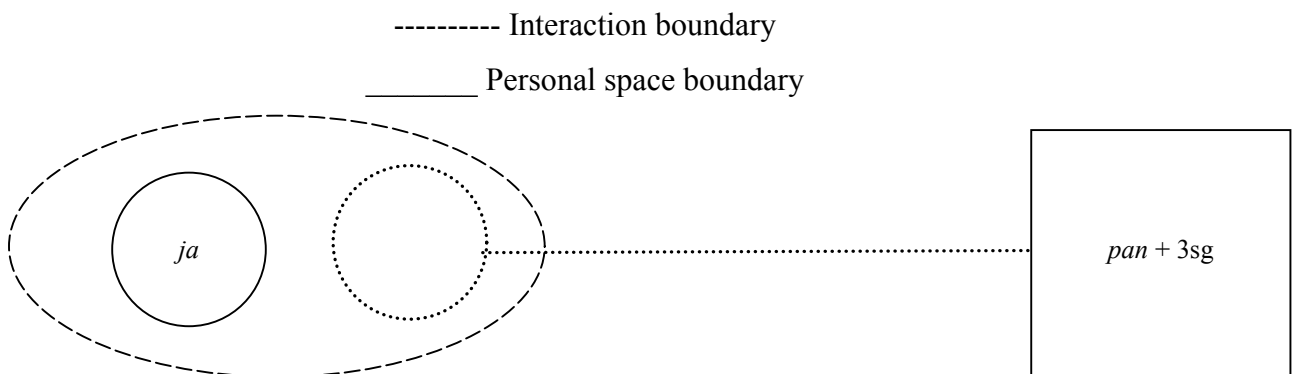
In terms of space and size, however, I suggest that the 2sg marking on the verb diminishes the size of the space this pronoun designating non-self occupies (see Diagram 5 below). Further, just as diminutives are sometimes used as a politeness strategy to mitigate the strength of statements in various languages, second person mitigates the distance imposed by *pan*. Any form in 2sg, after all, occupies the smallest space closest to the *ja*-space. The presence of *pan*, however, increases the distance from the *ja*-space (because third person is remote). Thus, *pan* + 2sg is a small but somewhat distant object; it is similar to *ja* in size, but it is not as close as the *wy*-space and not as distant as *pan* + 3sg. The example sentence in Table 3, *Za mało pan dałeś!* ‘You [P] gave [T] me too little!’ was spoken by a waiter to a drunken and apathetic Birkut in *Man of Marble*; the waiter must use *pan*, for this is a business transaction and he must properly distance himself from the customer; however, the 2sg verb suggests slight disrespect, or at least

that Birkut is not entitled to the full respect a customer usually deserves. Birkut, after all, has wronged the waiter by not properly paying his bill.



**Diagram 5: *ja* and *pan* + 2sg predicate**

By contrast, *pan* + 3sg occupies a larger, distant space (see Diagram 6 below). I suggest the size is determined by the *lack* of the ‘diminutive’ marker (2sg), and both the pronoun and predicate are 3sg and remote (i.e., as distant as possible from *ja*). *Panie Mauer, co pan zrobił w sprawie kapitana Nowakowskiego?* ‘Mr. Mauer, what **did you** [P]**do** [P] in the Captain Nowakowski affair?’ Mr. Mauer is being investigated by a committee in the early 1990’s; it is an official proceeding and requires the full honorific *pan*+ 3sg.



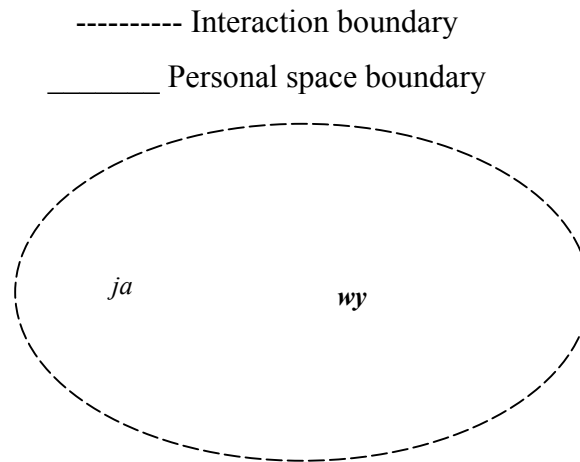
**Diagram 6: *ja* and *pan* + 3sg predicate**

The plural pronouns work in much the same way as the singular. Let us examine, from smallest and closest to largest and most distant, the plural pronouns of address.

<i>pronoun</i>	<i>size and location relative to ja</i>	<i>motivating metaphors</i>
<p>wy</p> <p><b>Wy</b> <i>młodzi jesteście, a ja co?</i></p> <p><b>You</b>[V] <b>are</b>[V] young , but what about me?</p>	smallest and closest	INTIMACY IS CLOSENESS SIMILARITY IS CLOSENESS YOUNG IS SMALL
<p><i>państwo</i> + 2pl</p> <p><i>Mam wrażenie, że państwo coś przede mną ukrywacie.</i></p> <p>I have the feeling that <b>you</b> [P] <b>are hiding</b> [V] something from me.</p>	? <i>less common</i> small (2pl), but distant ( <i>państwo</i> , see collective description below)	UNIMPORTANT (or at least LESS IMPORTANT) IS SMALL DIFFERENCE IS DISTANCE
<p><i>państwo</i> + 3pl</p> <p><b>Państwo</b> <i>się nie gniewają, że prosiłam wycierać nogi, ale...</i></p> <p><b>You</b> [P] <b>don't get mad</b> [P] that I asked you to wipe your feet, but...</p>	biggest and most distant (lack of second person relative smallness; third person completely outside conversation; also so distant that a group appears to be one—the further away you get from a group of things, the more you perceive it as ONE thing; e.g. one can see individual trees close, one mass forest from a distance)	DIFFERENCE IS DISTANCE IMPORTANT IS BIG (or at least NOT SMALL)

**Table 4: Plural pronouns**

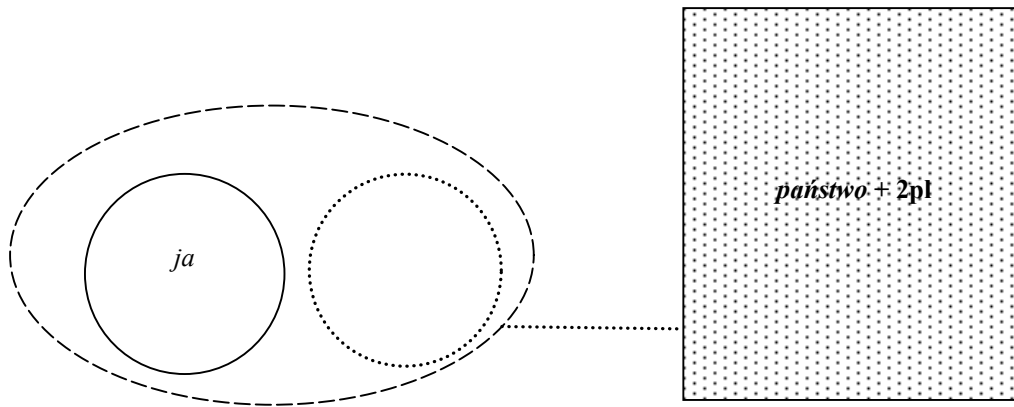
Plural *wy*, the first example in Table 4, occupies the smallest and closest space to *ja* of the plural pronouns. It is generally thought of as the ‘intimate, familiar plural’; thus, it is essentially the plural counterpart of *ty*. One could view the *wy*-space as being made up of many individual *ty*-spaces. It is certainly bigger than the *ja*-space, but it is close enough to be identified as similar. *Wy* can also be a large space made up of addressees who are all somehow LESS (smaller) than the holder of the *ja* space. In the example in Table 4, *Wy młodzi jesteście, a ja co?* ‘**You**[V] **are**[V] young, but what about me?’ the speaker is an old man who is emphasizing his age (MORE years) to his interlocutor (speaking for a group of younger people with whom he has worked for quite some time). Each person in the group has LESS years than he; thus, it is perfectly logical that he address them with the pronoun that indicates LESS (even though it is plural).



**Diagram 7: *ja* and *wy* (plural)**

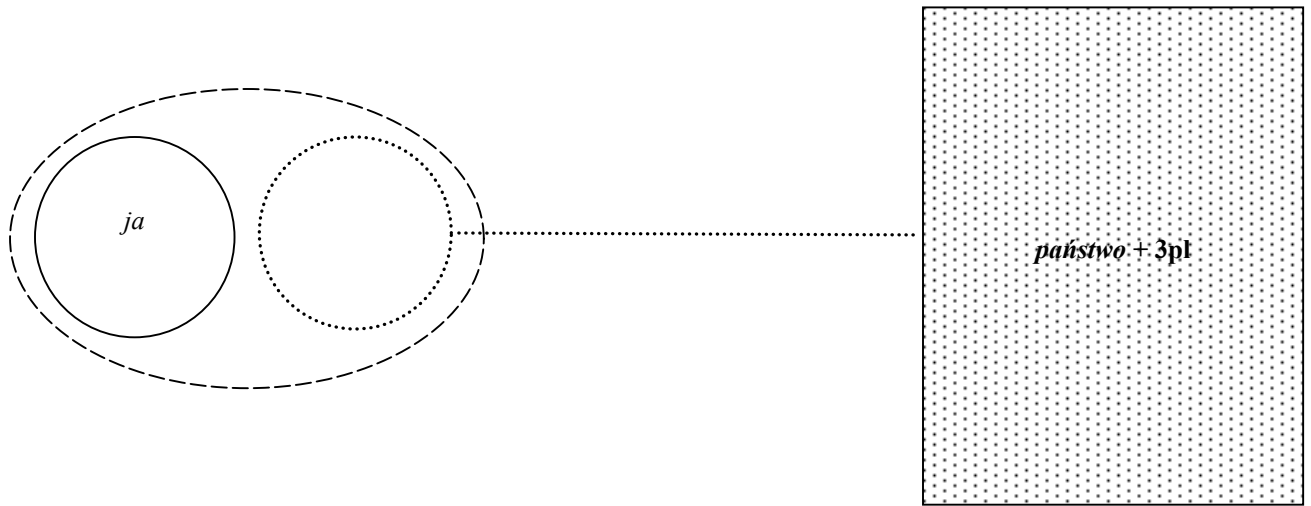
By contrast, *państwo* is the formal / respectful plural. *Państwo* occupies a space so distant from *ja*, in fact, that, as a collective, its individual members cannot be distinguished except through its predicate, which in the standard language, is always 3pl masculine. As with *pan*, however, the 2pl is also possible. Gerald Stone (1981: 66-67) suggests a 2pl predicate makes address with *państwo* less formal. Although this combination does not appear in dialog in either of the movies I examined, I did find this sentence in a Polish language corpus: *Mam wrażenie, że państwo coś przede mną ukrywacie.* ‘I have the feeling that **you’re** [P] **hiding** [V] something from me.’

Unfortunately, we have no way of knowing the context. It is feasible, however, that the second person marking on the predicate again diminishes the overall effect of the collective *państwo* by marking the space specifically as smaller and more proximate to *ja*; but *państwo* itself occupies a remote space, that of the third person and is thus very distant from *ja*.



**Diagram 8: *ja* and *państwo* + 2pl predicate**

*Państwo* plus 3pl predicate, then, is the most distant, *not small* space in the entire system: ***Państwo się nie gniewają***, że prosiłam wycierać nogi, ale... ‘**You [P] don’t get mad [P]** that I asked you to wipe your feet, but...’ Hanka, the speaker, has just invited a film crew who will be interviewing her into her house. The situation is formal, the individuals in the group are unknown, and she is addressing the entire group; thus, *państwo* plus 3pl is entirely appropriate.



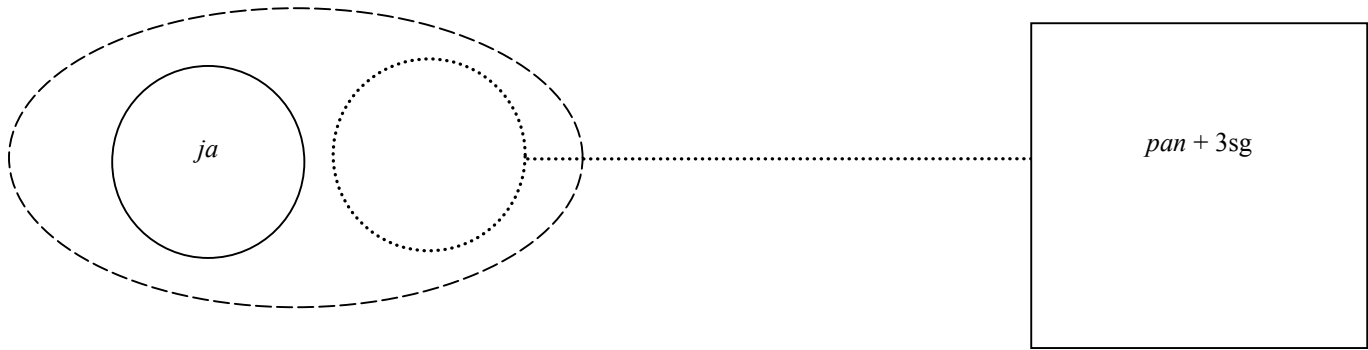
**Diagram 9: *ja* and *państwo + 3pl* predicate**

An important and logical question arises: Is there any external physical evidence that the concepts *space* and *size* provide any more than a convenient analytical framework for understanding how and why Poles use pronouns of address? That is, do Poles actually conceptualize relationships in terms of space and size? If we look only at situations in which there is mutual address (both *ty*, both *pan*, etc.), often little physical evidence is offered one way or the other. However, by examining instances in which there is some sort of pronoun switch (*pan* to *ty*, *ty* to *wy*, and so on)-- some *negotiation* of space-- we find evidence that Poles do, in fact, conceptualize address relations in terms of size and space. Each interlocutor has his own space that is assigned a personal pronoun. These spaces, though, can be manipulated, resized, and relocated to express changes in relationships. Similarly, physical space can be manipulated along with the metaphorical, pronominal space: the speaker can change his or her own size, or s/he can increase or decrease the physical distance between him or her and the interlocutor.

Let's examine examples of such manipulation of space from *Man of Marble*:

*Agnieszka (redaktorowi): A teraz pana szanuje?*

*Agnieszka (to the editor): And now does he respect you [P]?*



Agnieszka-----

Redaktor

*Agnieszka: **Ty, słuchaj!** Ja muszę zrobić ten film! A **ty musisz** mi na to pozwolić!*

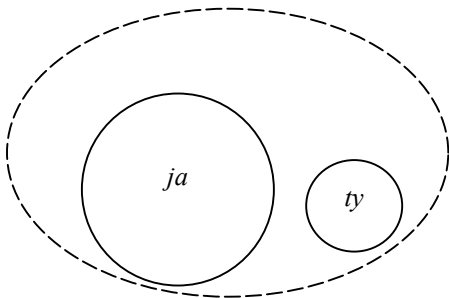
***Rozumiesz?***

*Redaktor: A co robię cały czas? Dałem materiały, sprzęt, pieniądze! Za czyje pieniądze to **robisz?** Za społeczne! A ja za nie odpowiadam!*

Agnieszka: **Listen [T], you [T]!** I have to make this film! And **you [T] have to [T]** let me! **Understand [T]?**

Redaktor: And what do I do the whole time? I gave you materials, equipment, money!

Whose money are **you doing [T]** this with? The public's! But I'm responsible for it!

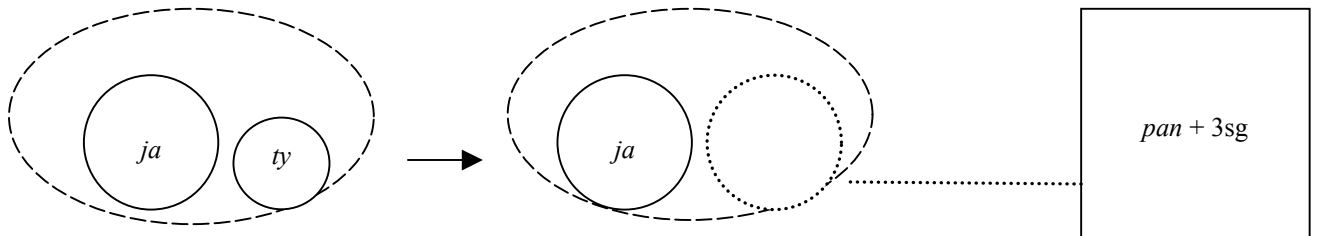


Agnieszka-----Redaktor

Redaktor-----Agnieszka

Agnieszka: Ale **musisz** się...**Musi** się **pan** ze mną porozumieć do końca!

Agnieszka: But **you have to** [T]...**you** [P] **have to** [P]give me a break!



Agnieszka-----Redaktor

...

Agnieszka-----

Redaktor

In this scene, Agnieszka is speaking to her editor, who is refusing to let her finish her film. Until this point they have consistently addressed each other as *pan/pani* + 3sg; essentially they allow each other a great deal of space and occupy spaces of equal size. However, she becomes furious with him and switches to *ty*: *Ty, słuchaj!* This is an act of aggression in which she verbally diminishes his size and decreases the space between them in an attempt to control him. In fact, this verbal aggression is accompanied by a real decrease in distance between them; as she begins *Ty, słuchaj*, she draws very near the editor and pins him against a wall. At the end of this passage she regains her composure and switches back to *pan*, reestablishing the distance between them and the sizes their personal space had previously occupied.

A second example appears in the same film:

*Birkut: Przemówić mi **daj!** No, mówię od **ciebie!** No?*

*Przewodniczący: Nie mam **ciebie** w porządku dziennym ani w wolnych wnioskach. Poza tym tu zaraz będzie kino i to podobno bardzo śmieszne.*

*Birkut: Parę słów tylko! To bardzo ważne! **Dajże** mi głos, no, proszę **cię!***



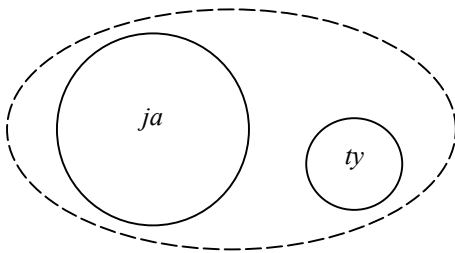
*Przewodniczący: Mateusz, czyś ty dziecko? Przecież tekst nieugodniony, nikt nie czytał, jak ty chcesz tak wystąpić?...*

Birkut: **Give** [T] me the floor! Are **you** [T] deaf? Well?

Chairman: **You're** [T] not on the agenda. After this there'll be a movie and as I understand it it's very funny.

Birkut: Just a couple of words! It's very important! **Give** [T] me the floor, please!

Chairman: Matthew, were **you** [T] born yesterday? **You** [T] **want** [T] to make a speech that hasn't been cleared?...

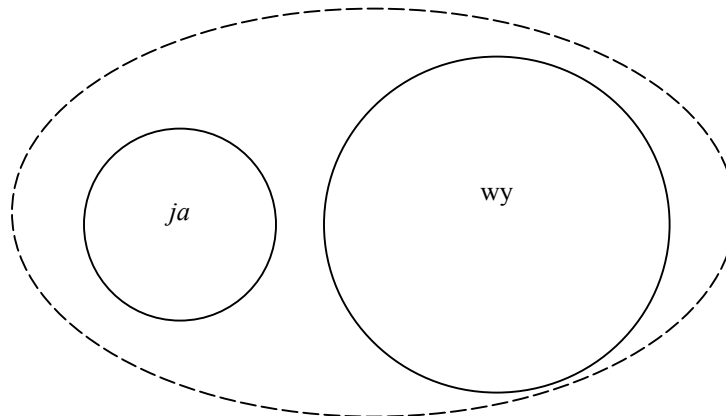


Birkut-----przewodniczący

Przewodniczący-----Birkut

*Przewodniczący: Towarzyszu Birkut! Ja nie udzielam **wam** głosu! Proszę natychmiast zejść!...*

Chairman: Comrade Birkut! **You** [V] do not have the floor! Please come down from there immediately!



Przewodniczący-----Birkut

In this scene, Birkut wants to speak at a Union meeting. He approaches the chairman, presumably a friend of his, and addresses him with *ty*. However, the chairman won't give him the floor, saying *Mateusz, czyś ty dziecko?* 'Matthew, were **you** [T] born yesterday?', using the *ty*- form and first name. Birkut then rushes to the podium and begins to speak anyway, at which point his friend the chairman rises from his chair and switches to a more formal way of addressing him: *Towarzyszu Birkut! Ja nie udzielam **wam** głosu!* 'Comrade Birkut! **You** [V] do not have the floor!' Since the official formal pronoun of address of the Communist Party in Poland was *wy*, the chairman's switch to *wy* and from first name to "Comrade Birkut" signals a complete change in space: he has moved them from the friend space, where *ja* (the chairman) allows Birkut (*ty*) into his space by making him small and close, to official space, where *wy* is too big to be part of *ja*. In essence, by changing Birkut's size, the chairman makes the statement "It's not personal; rules are rules."

In addition, the chairman's switch from *ty* to *wy* is accompanied by a real physical increase in his own size; as he shouts his admonishment to Birkut, the chairman rises from a sitting position (in which he remained while using *ty* with Birkut) to a standing position (when he switches to *wy*). It is when he is acting in his official capacity that the chairman increases the size of both speakers (metaphorically by using *wy* to Birkut, and physically by his own movement to a standing position, thereby increasing his height). If the conversation were to continue (which, unfortunately, it does not), Birkut should address the chairman with *wy*, for the situation has changed from a friendly *ty*-based request to an official *wy*-based altercation.

There is a third example in the same film.

*Michalak: Dobry wieczór, towarzyszu Birkut. Nie śpicie? Ja **was** rozumiem. Trudno spać po czymś takim. Porządnie **was** opatrzyli, co? Jodynką posmarowali?*

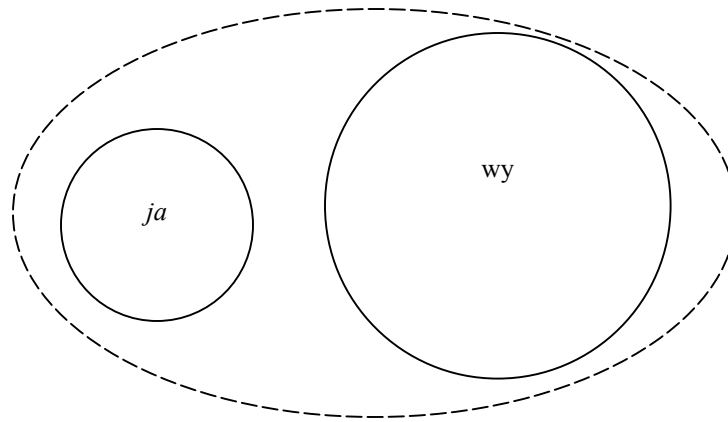
*Birkut: Nie.*

*Michalak: Nie?*

'Michalak: Good evening, comrade Birkut. Not **sleeping** [V]? I understand **you** [V]. It's hard to sleep after something like that. Did they look after **you** [V] OK? Did they apply iodine?

Birkut: No.

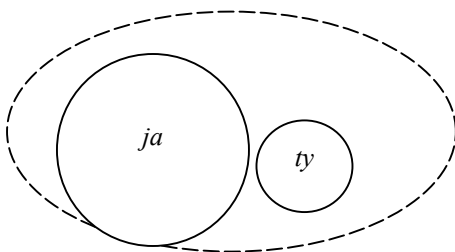
Michalak: No?’



Michalak-----Birkut

*Birkut: **Ty, słuchaj.** Kto **ty** właściwie **jesteś**, co? Tak się **włóczysz** za nami...**Ty, odczep się, dobrze?***

‘Birkut: **Listen [T], you [T].** Just who **are [T] you [T]? You’re [T]** always **hanging around [T]** us... **You [T] get out [T]** of here, OK?’



Birkut-----Michalak

In this scene, Birkut has been involved in an accident, and Michalak, a security officer, is questioning the medical treatment he received. Michalak also uses this occasion to question the loyalty of Birkut’s friend and coworker; the security officer is

suspicious that the coworker caused the accident to sabotage Birkut's remarkable work. (This part of the dialog is not given above). Michalak uses the *wy* of communism with Birkut. However, when Birkut becomes angry he addresses Michalak with the *ty* of aggression; at the same time rudely tells the officer to leave him and his friend alone, he rises and moves closer to Michalak. Thus, Birkut simultaneously increases his own size (height) by rising from a sitting position to a standing position, and he decreases Michalak's size. He also decreases the space between them. Birkut metaphorically adjusts his own size and that of his interlocutor to impose his will over the officer; his simultaneous rise from the cot reinforces that Birkut is in control of him and the situation.

Thus, Polish speakers adjust their embodied experience of space and size and manipulate their use of pronouns to parallel this experience. They conceptualize and categorize relationships based on size and space assigned to interlocutors. That is, characteristics of the concepts *space* (proximity, distance, direction up, direction down, and so on) and *size* (large, small) have been extended to the domains of social relations and emotions. Evidence that supports this claim appears in the form of real physical changes in the distance between speakers and the sizes of the speakers when interlocutors are manipulating pronominal space.

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Polish data was taken from the movies *Psy* 'The pigs' and *Człowiek z marmuru* 'Man of marble'

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<sup>i</sup>For instance, *ty byłeś, ty byłaś, ty byłoś, oni byli* (sg, dialectal), *wy byliście, wy byłyście, pan był, pan byłeś, pani była, pani byłaś, panowie byli, panowie byliście, panie były, panie byłyście, państwo byli, państwo byliście, wujek był, wujek byłeś* can all simply be translated 'you were'.

<sup>ii</sup> In discussions of polite pronouns in various languages, 2pl is often designated simply V and thus may represent Russian *vy*, Czech *vy*, Polish *wy*, French *vous*, and so on. T designates a 2sg pronoun, such as Russian *ty*, Czech *ty*, Polish *ty*, and French *tu*. Finally, P, specific to Polish, represents any 'third person' address: *pan, pani, państwo*, and so on.