To refer to a singular addressee with a pronoun of 3rd person plural in order to distance: Rare by chance or necessity?

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Part A Uneven crosslinguistic distributions and how to account for them

Part B Case study: 3rd plural for 2nd singular for purpose of distancing

Part A

Given that something grammatical or lexical is humanly possible for homo sapiens sapiens loquens (i.e., is not proscribed by an absolute universal, specifically linguistic or generally cognitive), it may be found to be

- **evenly distributed**
- **frequent** ...
- **rare**, even **unique**, ...

across all languages spoken (their grammars & lexicons as mentally represented) at a given time.

At different times these distributions may be different: what is frequent at one time, may be rare at another, and vice versa.

Given that such observations of frequency/rarity can be empirically substantiated, what do they mean?

Do they mean anything of conceivable theoretical interest to linguists? Else, when you're collecting a linguistic RARITÄTENKABINETT you're really collecting a KURIOSITÄTENKABINETT, and you might as well collect stamps.

The extremes of frequency and rarity — occurring in **every** language or in **no** language respectively (**universality** and **non-existence**), have always been assumed to be of theoretical interest: this is what absolute universals are about (as collected in THE UNIVERSALS ARCHIVE).

(Their own theoretical interest depends on the assumption that the set of all languages known to have been spoken over the 100 to 200,000 years of the history of human speaking is not itself a randomly limited subset of the set of languages (i) actually spoken by mankind so far and (ii) potentially to be spoken in future.)

It is, to say the least, not obvious what theoretical significance statistical generalisations over all (known) languages might have.

What could it mean, and why should one care, that something is found as frequently as in 97% or 57% or as rarely as in 3% or 43% of all languages?

Where do you draw the line of significance — 57, 67, 77, 87, 97% for frequent, 43, 33, 23, 13, 3% for rare? Why there?

To get an angle on the question, it will be useful to be able to distinguish whether frequency and rarity are due to **chance** or **necessity**. The case of necessity would seem to promise greater theoretical interest.

Something frequent/rare will be frequent/rare by **chance**, linguistically speaking, if a speech community has been successful/not successful in surviving and spreading, or, if not itself spreading, in becoming linguistically/culturally/politically so dominant as to be able to pass on their own speech peculiarities to other speech communities it is in contact with.

If an uneven distribution of a linguistic phenomenon has this reason, historians of populations (speech communities) are called for to account for it; theoretical linguists will not (have to) see this as a challenge for themselves.

If frequency and rarity are not due to population-historical chance, but are assumed to be due to linguistic **necessity**, they are commonly accounted for in terms of **structural complexity**: what is more complex, in one way or another (relating to storage, production, or perception of forms and constructions), will supposedly be rarer than what is less complex.

But <u>why</u> assume such a link between simplicity and frequency, complexity and rarity?

Assuming such a link would seem plausible primarily if what is complex **implies**, or even better, **consists of** what is simpler.

For example, the labial affricate /pf/ is more complex than the labial plosive /p/ and the labial fricative /f/ which it consists of (sort of).

By virtue of being an affricate, it is also more complex than the (frequent) velar plosive /k/ or the (less frequent) uvular plosive /q/.

Presumably, the intrinsic structural relation of potential relevance for frequency/rarity is only that between the labials. Among affricates, labial /pf/ is far rarer than alveolar /ts/: How is it less complex? An alveolar/non-alveolar contrast implies a labial/non-labial contrast in phoneme inventories.

But otherwise, if there are no structural implications or whole-part relations between complex and simple?

Well, the answer here might be **diachronic**: all complexity takes time to build up, regardless of how it relates to something simpler (containing or implying it or not). And if it is observed to be rare, it may not have had enough time to build up. Check again later, in a hundred or a thousand years ...

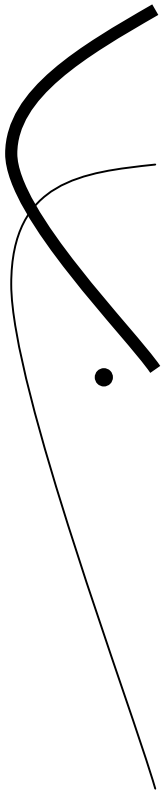
[Or is this language-as-edifice imagery?]

Something can also be frequent or rare by **linguistic-historical necessity** (rather than population-historical contingency):

What takes long to be introduced and/or is fast gotten rid of will, ceteris paribus, be encountered less frequently across languages, at any one time, than what is introduced fast and pertinaciously hangs on when grammars and lexicons are passed on from generation to generation, even to new generations of other speech communities.

The theoretical challenge here will be to account for why changes take long or go fast.

Aside on the concept of linguistic CHANGE, in order to avoid the 'x becomes y' imagery (as if we were dealing with things with spatio-temporal continuity whose essence remains the same, but whose accidental properties change), and not to mix up diachronic correspondences with change:



- $grammar_t$ — mentally represented by members of a speech community which exists at a particular place and time

$speech\ acts_t$ — performed by members of that speech community (forms-in-constructions produced and comprehended)

- $grammar_{t+1}$ — arrived at abductively by the next generation of members of the same speech community, on the evidence of speech $acts_t$, and possibly subject to timeless constraints on grammars and preferences for grammars

$speech\ acts_{t+1}$

How to **individuate** changes?

- What is one change, rather than two, three ...?

  What is one **elementary** change, as opposed to one **composite** change (or indeed a whole drift) comprising several subchanges?

  (Two changes take longer than one, unless they are simultaneous.)
- When are two occurrences of change the **same** change?

Compare:

Is what is frequent or rare one (elementary) trait or a composite set of (interrelated) traits?

The Great Vowel Shift in English: <u>one</u> change?

yes, in a sense: a single <u>chain reaction</u> (probably push rather than drag)

When?	15th – 17th centuries (over ca. 12 generations);
	in varieties of English partly ongoing,
	partly still incomplete (high vowels in Scots)
Explanatory principles:	symmetry of vowel-space organisation,
	avoidance of merger
Lexical diffusion?	cf. *break*, *great*, *steak*, *yea*, *Yeats*, *Re(a)gan*,
	Shea (ME /ɛː/)

How rare or frequent are such 6-short-vowel and 5-long-vowel systems (three heights)?

	SHORT		LONG		
	FRONT	BACK	FRONT	CENT	BACK
HIGH	ɪ	ʊ	iː		uː
MID	ɛ	ʌ		ɜː	ɔː
LOW	æ	ɒ			ɑː

In the case of English (RP), it took long for such a system to come about. In particular, it took the **Great Vowel Shift**: front and back long vowels raise one level, and diphthongise when they can't raise further; central long vowel is also fronted.

iː uː

eː oː

əj əw

ɛː ɔː

æː

aː

ME	late ME, early ModE	ModE	
tiːd	təjd	tajd	<tide>
luːd	ləwd	lawd	<loud>
geːs	giːs	gijs	<geese>
sɛː	siː	sij	<sea>
goːs	guːs	guws	<goose>
brɔːkən	broːkən	browkən	<broken>
naːmə	næːm, neːm	nejm	<name>

Change and (real) time

Trivially, for a change to occur, it needs

(i) an **innovation** (by individuals, subsets of a speech community)

(ii) its **acceptance** (by the whole speech community, or a subset of it, thus occasioning a split within the speech community)

Trivially, an innovation can consist in

(i) the **introduction** of something new (representations, rules/constraints, to express paradigmatic and syntagmatic contrasts in articulating one's thought; forms-in-constructions)

(ii) the **modification** of something old

(iii) the **loss** of something old

What about a change can **take time**?

- its ACTUATION (?)
  depending on whether an innovation is dependent on simple or complex conditions permitting or triggering it, or may even occur out of the blue
- its COMPLETION
  if it is gradual and has intermediate stages
- its DIFFUSION
  - across structural domains
    - across the lexicon
    - across other relevant structural domains:
      paradigms, word subclasses, clause types, ...
  - across speech styles of individuals
  - across the speech community

Terminological distinctions as to temporality of kinds of innovations:

Something is **imminent (forthcoming)** if it is innovated fast (can't wait),
vs. **diffident** if it it takes long to be innovated (would rather not).

Something is **pertinacious (stable)** if it takes long to be lost or modified,
vs. **evanescent (unstable)** if it is lost or modified quickly;

Hypothesis: **fast** = 3 generations (the minimum); **slow** = many more

Then: Ceteris paribus, what is **imminent** and **pertinacious** will be encountered more frequently, at any given time, than what is **diffident** and **evanescent**.

What about imminent & evanescent, diffident & pertinacious — given these are possible combinations?

Actually, representations and rules/constraints, or forms-in-constructions, on their own aren't the proper objects for temporalising (forthcoming/diffident, pertinacious/evanescent): they need to be seen in relation to **the particular ways and means** of their introduction, modification, loss. (That will be one of the morals of the case study to follow.)

The loss of the DUAL, and concomitantly the introduction of HONORIFIC, in Icelandic: How temporality of change might bear on crosslinguistic distribution

Pronominal forms for 1st and 2nd person dual were no longer used with these meanings, but were used for 1st and 2nd person plural non-honorific, with forms for 1st and 2nd person plural becoming honorific 1st and 2nd person singular (and plural, but this is now obsolete).

i.e., loss of dual by means of **semantic reanalysis**;
there are other possible means to the same end, in particular the discontinuation or phonological obliteration of the forms themselves that had dual meaning.

How long did 'loss of DUAL', 'introduction of HONORIFIC' take?

It was fast: **three** generations (80-90 years, Guðmundsson 1972: 90),

- the first innovating (first using old dual forms with new plural meanings),
- the second showing variation,
- the third accepting the innovation (using old dual forms with only plural meanings).

Guðmundsson (1972) suggests Attic Greek also needed three generations to get rid of its dual (verbal, nominal, pronominal: hence more complex structural diffusion). Cuny (1930: 52), on the other hand, holds that the dual loss, always inevitable, can be *"lente ou rapide"* (no measure given).

Dual loss à la Icelandic is not **gradual** (perhaps contributing to speed): a form, in an occurrence in a particular construction, either has dual or (non-honorific) plural meaning. (Or are there ambiguities, and this is evidence of gradualness?)

Diffusion of dual loss/honorific introduction:

- possibly across structural domains:
  - personal pronouns for 1st person, for 2nd person;
  - four cases of both pronouns: NOM, ACC, DAT (but ACC=DAT), GEN

    Or did the semantic reanalysis DUAL > NON-HONORIFIC PLURAL, and concomitantly (?) PLURAL > HONORIFIC SINGULAR, happen **simultaneously** with both pronouns [YES] and in all four cases [YES], thereby speeding it up?
- across speech styles of individuals;
- across the speech community.

Is the DUAL **evanescent** in general?

But then, How come about 50% of the world's languages at present have a DUAL (of one kind or another, mostly pronominal or including pronominal)?

On the other hand, over the last three millennia there appear to have been more cases of dual loss than of dual introduction.

Is the DUAL equally **imminent** as it is evanescent?

But then, the distribution of the DUAL seems genetic rather than areal, suggesting diachronic stability (and low borrowability).

Does the actual introduction of a DUAL take about as long as its actual loss?

(Loss presumably takes longer. Why? From having a dual to not having a dual is a complex change, requiring its loss from **all** domains. Introduction only needs a single domain. [???])

Comparing frequencies of changes in different directions:

Is it rarer for PLURAL forms to be reanalysed as DUAL than for DUAL forms to be reanalysed as PLURAL?

Yes, by far. (But why? Complexity: markedness [=achronic]?)

Hence, given an equal number of languages with only PLURAL and with only DUAL, at some later time (with these languages being acquired by several generations of learners without access to other languages) there will be more languages with only PLURAL than languages with only DUAL.

Unrealistic point of departure (Why? Owing to the ways number contrasts are introduced. DUAL most frequently grammaticalised from numeral 'two'.

More realistically, assuming an equal number of such languages:

- ones with only PLURAL (marked vis-à-vis singular),
- ones with PLURAL and DUAL (marked non-singular),

The only-PLURAL languages will not/rarely turn into PLURAL-and-DUAL languages, but the PLURAL-and-DUAL languages will more frequently turn into only-PLURAL languages.

However, it is humanly possible to reanalyse PLURAL forms (personal pronouns, as in Iceleandic) as DUAL.

And it actually happened at least once or twice, in Nganasan and northern dialects of Ostyak (Uralic; Vértes 1967, Helimski 1998).

Admittedly rare, but then what do I know ...

So far as can be told, the innovations didn't take long. Three generations, perhaps (Guðmundsson's Rule of Thumb).

Hence, there aren't really any good diachronic reasons to expect languages with duals (innovated through semantic reanalysis) to be less frequent than languages without duals (innovated through semantic reanalysis).

Weinreich, Labov, & Herzog 1968

problems for an empirical theory of language change:

- constraints: (im)possible changes, possible conditions on change
- embedding: co-occurring other changes
- evaluation: effects on structure (optimisation, pessimisation)
- actuation: causes, triggers
  (conducive to change?, necessitating change?)
- transition: intervening stages

Change and typology

The relationship between achronic and diachronic necessity is intriguingly conditional:

- it could be that achronic constraints, to do with structural complexity, are responsible for what is happening or is not happening, or is happening fast or slow, diachronically;
- or it could also be that constraints on how forms and constructions can be reanalysed diachronically, and are available for acquisition and subsequent reanalysis in the first place, are responsible for the grammars and lexicons that happen to be internalised (and socially shared) at any one time.

Where we stand (or, at any rate, I)

I think it is fair to say that relatively little is reliably known about frequent and rare linguistic phenomena being due to chance or necessity (and about frequency/rarity of crosslinguistic distributions in the first place). The more frequent misconception is probably to assume that something is frequent or rare by necessity which is really due to population-historical chance, rather than the other way round.

The temporality of change ($grammar_t > grammar_{t+1}$; speech act_t – speech act_{t+1} are diachronic correspondences) isn't well understood either.

Part B Further exploration of what is frequent and rare, and how come:

Ways of distancing an addressee

The phenomenon (or phenomena) that I would like to look at in this sort of context are pronouns of honorific, in particular distancing, address, and where and how they are recruited for this function.

[Power and solidarity; politeness, respect; face-threatening acts; ... What matters, for present purposes, is that a relation to one's addressee(s) is defined or recognised by the speaker as being a (personally, emotionally, socially, ...) **distant** one, as opposed to close.]

If a distance contrast for pronouns for referring to individual addressees (and presumably also for addressing them, in vocatives outside a sentence) is made at all, it is most frequently **plural or other non-singular 2nd person** pronouns that are used for honorific singular address (**as if** to aggrandise the addressee, and correspondingly humble the speaker).

In the convenience sample of Head (1978), 87 out of ca. 100 languages shift to non-singular 2nd person for distancing address.

Less frequently, person is shifted rather than, or in addition to, number (**as if** to regard the addressee as not involved in the speech act): pronouns of **3rd person singular**, or also **plural or other non-singular**, can also be used for respectful, deferential, or at any rate distancing reference to a singular addressee.

In the convenience sample of Head (1978), 19 out of ca. 100 languages shift to 3rd person.

In terms of complexity, one would expect **3rd singular** to be more frequent than **3rd non-singular** for this purpose: it would only require one shift (2nd to 3rd person) as opposed to two (2nd to 3rd person, singular to non-singular number).

This latter complexity-inspired expectation does not in fact seem to be borne out: among the languages that shift to 3rd person, more simultaneously also shift to non-singular than keep the 3rd person pronoun singular. At least this is the frequency distribution in the convenience sample of Head (1978): of 19 languages with 3rd-person-for-single-addressee, at least 13 have this 3rd person in the plural.

3NON-SG for singular addressee (Head 1978)

German	Germanic	Indo-European
Danish		
Norwegian		
Swedish (varieties)		
Amharic	S Semitic	Afroasiatic
Jangor	W Omotic	
Bemba	CE Bantu	Niger-Congo
Nsenga		
Lala	Adamawa	
Lamba	Gur	
Tagalog	NW Austronesian	Austronesian
Efate	E Oceanic	
Eastern Pomo		Hokan

3SG for singular addressee (Head 1978)

Italian	Romance	Indo-European
Kashmiri	Indo-Aryan	
Harari	S Semitic	Afroasiatic
Kefa	Omotic	
Walamo		
Sotho	SE Bantu	Niger-Congo

[I believe a larger sample would get us more addenda to the 3SG than to the 3NON-SG group. Probably they'd end up level.]

What I would like to argue in particular is that looking at crosslinguistic frequency distributions of distancing through 3rd singular vs. non-singular pronouns for singular addressees, and both vis-à-vis 2nd non-singular, is misleading because it suggests that we are looking at a single phenomenon or a homogeneous set of them.

When one adopts a diachronic perspective, it is seen that such 3rd person distant addressing can come about in different ways and from different sources.

The easiest and fastest way (single change), and presumably the relatively speaking most common, is that of mere **metaphorical person** and perhaps **number shifting**.

So far as I can tell (often lacking reliable historical information), all languages other than the Germanic ones in the above tables (based on Head 1978) took that short route.

The starting point of the other, slower route (or family of routes, each with various intermediate steps) of getting 3rd person pronouns for distancing an addressee are **nouns**:

(i) **nouns for social relationships** on the one hand (such as ‘master’ and ‘servant’), and

(ii) **nouns for abstract qualities** of speech-act participants on the other (such as ‘your highness/honour’ and ‘my lowliness/shame’: pars pro toto, abstractum pro concreto, namely abstract quality for person).

It is the diachronic scenarios of addressing through such abstract qualities, and of the syntactic constructions such terms of address form part of (in particular with respect to agreement), that are my central concern here.

Using nouns designating abstract qualities — such as ‘your highness’ and ‘my lowliness’ for distancing (deferential) address and self-reference is humanly possible; but it only appears to be attested rarely. Such terms of address were possible in Ancient Greek and (Republican) Latin, but they really gained currency only in Imperial Rome, beginning with the newly and carefully devised address of the holder of a new office, the emperor (Augustus), *Tua*/*Vestra Maiestas* ‘your.SG/PL majesty’. The Latin model was continued in Medieval Latin as well as the Romance vernaculars, as well as in Byzantine and later Greek, and was adopted, sooner or later, more or less everywhere in the aristocracies of Europe, arguably given an extra boost by Spanish court etiquette of the 16th and

17th century. Outside Romance, Germanic, Greek, Slavic, Baltic, and Hungarian, all ultimately inspired by a special way of addressing the Roman Emperor, deferential addressing through abstract nouns plus possessive pronoun does not seem attested widely. It is found in Afroasiatic: with 2nd person suffixes of the appropriate gender (the addressee's), the abstract nouns 'presence' and 'sovereignty' (*ḥaḍra*, *siyāda*), one existential and the other honorific, serve as standard terms of deferential address in Arabic; 'your happiness' is a variation on this same theme. 'Your soul' is a term of address also elsewhere in Semitic and also in Cushitic; but this is really a somewhat different category of noun, more like body or body part nouns ('body', 'head', 'self') which

serve as terms of address more frequently than abstract nouns like ‘highness’, ‘lordship’, or ‘presence’ do. For certain American Indian languages, including Dakota, the most highly grammaticalised term of address, the 2nd person pronoun, has been claimed to be an existential abstract noun plus a possessive, just as in Arabic: ‘your presence’. And in East Asia there are at least Chinese and Japanese where there are some abstract nouns, such as ‘(your) (old/elder-brotherly) eminence, excellence’, ‘(my) selfishness’, among a host of terms of deferential address and self-reference.

(See Svennung 1958, with further references.)

Aside: The two kinds of sources aren't entirely distinct. Abstract qualities are one possible historical source of nouns for social relationships, which are typically used as titles and may in turn become (grammaticalised as) distancing terms of reference to singular addressees.

e.g., English *Sir* and its Romance source, French *Monsieur*, < *mon sieur* 'my lord', or also German *Herr*: the ultimate source of *sir* and its counterparts elsewhere in Romance is 'elder', i.e., Latin *senior*, the comparative of an attribute, *senex* 'old, aged; old person'; German *Herr* has an analogous history, deriving from the comparative of *hehr* 'old, venerable'. In the case of *monsieur* etc., the possessive pronoun got added when the attribute term had become a social role noun; had it been a term of address, it would now be *vossieur*, from 'YOUR elderness', or, in Dutch, *uwheer* instead of *mijnheer*.

As such abstract nouns for distancing address are rare, one wonders whether there a special **conditions** upon this mode of addressing. Such terms of address and self-reference instantiate the principle ABSTRACTUM PRO CONCRETO (APC), and one would expect that APC is active in the relevant languages (and cultures) also elsewhere – for example in reference rather than only in address. A beautiful person, a person of beauty, ought to be able to be referred to as 'beauty', a loved one as 'love', etc. People ought to be able to be named after their attributes ('Hope', 'Irene', 'Clement', etc.). Perhaps there would be special APC constructions, such as epexegetical genitives ('beauty of a girl', 'profligacy of a man', 'monstrosity of a painting', meaning 'beautiful girl',

‘profligate man’, ‘monstrous painting’). Presumably, not all languages practise APC, at least not to the same extent: to get terms of address through APC, you probably need to be an experienced practitioner. Possibly, there is also some crosslinguistic variation as to how firmly the distinction of concrete and abstract is grammatically entrenched in the first place. Such entrenchment should be reflected in word classes (concrete ≈ noun, abstract ≈ adjective) as well as in word subclasses, with concrete and abstract nouns showing different grammatical behaviour. When there is no overt distinction between an abstract and a concrete noun, one of its uses should still be recognizably primary (thus, ‘beauty’ is basically an abstract noun, which can secondarily be used with concrete reference).

Now, a first **change** for abstract nouns of deferential address on their way towards becoming or sponsoring pronouns is syntactic: From being vocatives or some such clause-external elements, as in (i), they are prone to be internalised, replacing the corresponding personal pronoun of address or self-reference and acquiring its full relational potential (being able to occur as subject, object, etc.) and the corresponding overt marking through case, agreement, etc.:

(i) 'Can I help you, Your Highness?'

(ii) 'Can I help Your Highness?'

This internalisation, on top of formal and semantic depletion, is what happened everywhere in European languages adopting this mode of addressing and self-reference ultimately inspired or at any rate seriously launched by Latin.

What can <u>further</u> happen to such nominal terms of metonymic address, themselves rare as a starting point, is that they are **reanalysed ("grammaticalised") as (more and more) pronominal**, through a sequence of formal, distributional, and semantic changes.

Examples:

Spanish *usted* < *vusted*, *vucé*, *vuced*, *voacé*, *vuesarced* < *vuestra merced*;

Portuguese *você* < *Vosmecê* < *Vossa Mercê* 'your grace';

Dutch *U* < *uwe edelheit* 'your grace', created somewhat differently, namely by the simple dropping of the abstract noun with the possessive pronoun alone surviving.

A question here is how such (incipient) pronominalisations are accommodated in systems of person: Will they be kinds of 2nd person (ii)? (Yes in Arabic, Rumanian, regional varieties of Spanish and Italian.)

(i) 'Has Your Highness found her crown?'

(ii) 'Have Your Highness found your crown?'

The alternative for nominal terms of abstract-quality address is to remain nouns, but to be **coreferenced by personal pronouns** corresponding in person, number, and relevant other agreement categories (including in particular gender/class, which may, however, also be selected in terms of natural gender), rather than through themselves (which would suggest pronominal status: 'Has/Have Your Highness found Your Highness's crown, or does/do Your Highness not wear it today?' — that's what Spanish *usted* etc. do):

'Have/Has Your Highness found his/your crown,
or does <u>It/He</u> not wear it today?'

The **gaining of referential (addressing) autonomy** of such originally only coreferential pronouns eventually — next step in a sequence of changes — leads to a new pronominal subcategory of distancing pronouns (cf. Italian *Lei*).

'Has He found his crown, or does He not wear it today?'

This again raises the question of how distancing addressee pronouns are accommodated in systems of person. (They always seem to remain 3rd person for just about all grammatical purposes. See German facts below.)

Given that abstract nouns ('honour, grace, highness ...'), the sources of such new distancing pronouns of singular address, will usually be singular, the other question is how such single-addressee pronouns can end up being morphologically plural (as with German *Sie*).

There would seem to be two ways, not necessarily mutually exclusive:

(i) The more straightforward one is to **manipulate number independently**, provided metaphorical ('aggrandising') pluralisation is practised in the speech community anyhow, for 2nd person or also 3rd (cf. German *ihr* as distancing vis-à-vis *du*; and, attested early *Was wünschen der Herr?* 'What do the mister want?');

More intricately, (ii) it may need a conspiracy of morphological accidents to pave the way for plural forms of anaphoric-pronouns-turned-distancing-pronouns becoming institutionalised (abstract nouns which are actually plural, and/or an inflectional system conducive to number reanalyses of relevant forms; similarity between singular feminine and gender-neutral plural; all relevant for German, see Metcalf 1938, Listen 1999, Simon 1999; the Scandinavian Germanic languages borrowed this mode from German).

Abstract nouns for deferential address in German:

Hoheit, *Heiligkeit*, *Majestät*, *Eminenz*, *Exzellenz*, *Gnaden*, *Ehren* (the last two plural forms, but singular reference);
in addition *Magnifizenz*, *Spektabilität*, *Durchlaucht*, *Hochwürden*, *(Hoch)Wohlgeboren*, *Herrlichkeit*, *Wenigkeit*;
(Wohl)Weisheit, *Liebde(n)*, *(Ge)Strenge*, *Feste*, *Niedere* are also mentioned by Jacob Grimm (1837: 297-298), but aren't, or weren't, equally popular.
Unlike *Lordship*, *Herrschaft* apparently isn't or wasn't used, the loan *Lordschaft*, with the suffix translated, is.

Note: All are feminine (anaphoric pronoun *sie*, like in PL); many of the weak declension where SG and PL are often neutralised (*-en*); some distinctly PL.

Abstract nouns for deferential address in Latin (often loan-translated in other languages):

a. imperatorial: *maiestas, indulgentia, clementia, mansuetudo*
b. generally deferential: *amplitudo, auctoritas, benignitas, celsitudo, eminentia, excellentia, experientia, felicitas, honestas, honorificentia, magnificentia, prudentia*
c. Christian ecclesiastical: *beatitudo, sanctitas, sanctitudo, reverentia, apostolica auctoritas*

Medieval chancelleries kept the habit going and added a few more attributes, usually distinguished for subtypes of addressees:

a. papal: *sanctitas, pietas, serenitas, paternitas*
b. other ecclesiastical: *gracia, solicitudine, seignoria*
c. monarchial: *maiestas, perennitas*
d. nobility and general deferential: *excellentia*

To conclude

While its outcome — 3rd person plural for distancing address of individuals — is not forbiddingly complex (though twice removed from 2SG), this latter diachronic story itself is so complex that it will rarely be seen to have run to completion.

How long did it take from beginning to end?

- If you look at it in terms of diffusion through an entire cultural area (Kulturbund), comprising the feudal societies of Europe, with Imperial Rome and later Castilian Spain under the Habsburgs as diffusion centres, almost two millennia until *Sie* in German was well entrenched.
- If you only look at the German part of the story (but why should one?), a century or two (4-8 generations).

Allowances have to be made for the unusual acquisition mode of distancing addressees: this is not learnt early in L1 acquisition, but during later socialisation, and it is never generalised to all speech styles.

DISTANCING *Sie* in Modern High German: How does it differ from 2SG/PL NON-DISTANCING on the one hand and from 3PL *sie* on the other?

(i) In imperative sentences, while non-distancing 2SG/PL subject pronouns are optional, being only used for special emphasis, distancing *Sie* is obligatory:

			IMP	pers.pro	
SG	2		*zeig(-e)*	*(du)*	*dein-e Fahrkarte vor!*
PL	2		*zeig-t*	*(ihr)*	*eur-e Fahrkarte vor!*
SG/PL	2?	DIST	*zeig-en*	**(Sie)*	*Ihr-e Fahrkarte vor!*
			'show	you	your ticket up!'

This would seem a rather arbitrary complication of the syntax of imperatives, requiring different treatment for subject pronouns depending on whether they are non-distancing or distancing. (But verb-first, as in regular imperative, but also in hortative/voluntative/optative sentences.)

(ii) The imperative form of the copula verb *sein* 'to be', morphologically the most complex verb of German: no dedicated form for 2 SG DIST, but shared with 3PL.IND.PRES or 3PL.SUBJ.PRES (distinct only in the case of *sein*), like with <u>indefinite</u> 3rd person pronoun subjects of imperatives (which themselves optionally also allow 2nd person imperative verb forms) (also like 1PL in hortatives):

SG 2	*Sei still!*	(=1/3SG.SUBJ.PRES)
	**Bist still!*	2SG.IND.PRES
	**Seiest still!*	2SG.SUBJ.PRES
PL 2	*Seid still!*	
	(*)Seid still!	2PL.IND.PRES
	**Seiet still!*	2PL.SUBJ.PRES
SG 2? DIST	——	
	Sind Sie still!	3PL.IND.PRES
	Seien Sie still!	3PL.SUBJ.PRES
	‘Be quiet!’	

PL 3 ——

Sind mal welche so nett ...! 3PL.IND.PRES

Seien mal welche so nett ...! 3PL.SUBJ.PRES

Seid mal welche so nett ...! 2PL.IMP

‘Be some [of you] so kind and ...!’

PL 1 ——

Sind wir mal still! 1PL.IND.PRES

Seien wir mal still! 1PL.IND.PRES

‘Let’s be quiet!’

(iii) Relative pronoun selection and agreement with relative pronoun subject

SG 2	*Du warst es,*	*der/die [3SG] <u>du</u> [2SG] mich verraten hast [2SG]*
		der/die [3SG] mich verraten hat [3SG]
PL 2	*Ihr wart es,*	*die [3PL] <u>ihr</u> [2PL] mich verraten habt [2PL]*
		die [3PL] mich verraten haben [3PL]
SG 2? DIST	*Sie waren es,*	*?die [3PL] <u>Sie</u> [DIST] mich verraten haben [3PL]*
		?die [3PL] mich verraten haben [3PL]
		?der/die [3SG] <u>Sie</u> [DIST] mich verraten haben [3P
		der/die [3SG] mich verraten hat [3SG]
PL 3	*sie waren es,*	**die [3PL] <u>sie</u> mich verraten haben [3PL]*
		die [3PL] mich verraten haben [3PL]

'it was you.SG/you.PL/you.DIST/them who have betrayed me'

The relative pronoun, itself 3rd person, agrees with its antecedent personal pronoun in gender and number.

The relative pronoun corresponding to 2nd person personal pronoun may or may not be accompanied by an extra (2nd person) personal pronoun.

The relative pronoun corresponding to 3rd person personal pronoun cannot be accompanied by an extra (3rd person) personal pronoun.

If the subject relative pronoun is accompanied by an 2nd person personal pronoun, then the latter determines verb agreement in the relative clause in person and number; otherwise the relative pronoun determines verb agreement in person (=3rd) and number.

To the distancing personal pronoun corresponds a relative pronoun which is singular, and which cannot be accompanied by the distancing pronoun (like 3rd person pronouns).While its outcome — 3rd person plural for distancing reference to individual addressees — is not forbiddingly complex, this latter diachronic story itself is so complex that it will rarely be seen to have run to completion.

Overall conclusion:

Distancing *Sie* is grammatically much more 3rd than 2nd person.

(Like wir in *Wie fühlen wir uns heute?* 'How do we feel today?' is grammatically more 1st than 2nd person, despite referring to the addressee.)