

How the Japanese address and refer to non-Japanese:

A survey of usages on Japanese television.

Margaret Maeda

Abstract

多くの日本に居住している外国人達がよく感じることは彼らが日本人からたびたびファースト・ネームで呼ばれることである。これは日本人同士がファースト・ネームで呼び合うケースと比べると比較にならないほど頻繁に行われている。日本人は外国人に対して自分たちをファミリー・ネーム + タイトル（-さん, Mr. または Ms. 等）で呼ばれるように期待しているにもかかわらず、彼らは外国人に対してファースト・ネームで呼び返すことが多い。外国人にとってこれは次の二つの原理原則を破ることになる。一つ目は呼称の相関性、二つ目は民族にかかわらず同等の扱いがなされていないということである。しかし多くの日本人にとって外国人はどんな場合でもファースト・ネームで呼ばれることを好んでいると信じ込まれている。筆者は各全国ネットのテレビ局で放送している番組を通じてこれらの現況を調べてみることにした。十八ヶ月かけて二百例を観察した結果、下記の二つの主な事例が判明した。外国人は自分たちの国の中で呼ばれるよりも多くファースト・ネームで呼ばれている。外国人女性のほうが外国人男性よりも頻繁にファースト・ネームで呼ばれている。

Introduction

One of the first things many non-Japanese notice on coming to Japan for the first time is that they are first-named far more than the Japanese first-name each other. Even though the Japanese generally address each other by family name, foreigners are first-named even

in a Japanese-language interaction. In introductions, non-Japanese are often introduced by first name and given only the family name of the Japanese person. They then either have to address the Japanese by family name while being first-named in return, or make a request for reciprocal use of first names or surnames. In many banks and hospitals, foreigners' first names are called out (with *-san*, but without the family name), something which never happens to a Japanese.

How do non-Japanese feel about being first-named when the Japanese usually use surnames? In the last 20 or 30 years in English-speaking and some other countries, the reciprocal use of first names has become so widespread that young people may have little experience of being called by title (Mr., Ms, Mrs., Miss, etc.) and last name. They may prefer to be addressed by first name, and be happy to address Japanese people in the way that they are used to. In other words, they may consider a non-reciprocal pattern to be the best way to deal with this cultural difference. On the other hand, particularly if they have learnt Japanese, they might hope to be addressed in the same way as the Japanese, not in a different way just because they are foreigners. In English-speaking and many other countries, it is usually taken for granted that Japanese and other foreigners will fit in with the address systems in those countries.

Older foreigners as well as some younger foreigners in Japan may find it difficult to accept being first-named when they are not expected to reciprocate. In cultures which stress egalitarianism, or at least an outward show of egalitarianism, the use of non-reciprocal address is mostly viewed negatively as a pattern used between superior and inferior and its use is becoming less frequent. Older non-Japanese may have grown up at a time when only children or people in low-status positions were routinely first-named without being expected to reciprocate, but in Japan they may find themselves being first-named by much younger Japanese who expect to be addressed by surname with *-san* in return, and in environments where no other adults are first-named. They may feel as if they are

being spoken to like a child or a subordinate, even if they know this impression is not intended. In Japanese society, the open expression of status differences is commonplace, and is not regarded negatively. It can come as a surprise to Japanese that non-reciprocal address is considered irritating by some non-Japanese.

The use of first names by the Japanese to refer to or address non-Japanese is almost certainly based on the assumption that first-naming is the custom among non-Japanese, and this is generally true for English speakers. The problem is that the custom is imported and applied to foreigners, but not to Japanese in the same settings, and the non-reciprocity which results is not a typical feature of the original address system.

The widespread belief among the Japanese, even those who have not been abroad, that non-Japanese normally use only first names almost certainly comes from television. This study of address forms for non-Japanese on Japanese television was carried out on this assumption.

Background

How people address each other reveals a great deal about the character of social relations in a society or culture, whether, for instance, there is stress on social distance, formality and status differentiation, or whether interactions are friendly and easy-going, with power and status differences minimized. In their classic study of linguistic politeness, Brown and Levinson (1987) distinguish two main kinds of politeness: negative politeness and positive politeness. Negative politeness is behavior which seeks to avoid imposing on another person; positive politeness is behavior which appeals to a person's desire to be appreciated. Brown and Levinson give Japan as an example of a typical negative-politeness culture and American (especially western American) society as an example of a positive-politeness culture. They judge British society to be somewhere between the two. Interactions in negative-politeness cultures are

typically formal and asymmetrical. Japanese society is described by Nakane (1970) as “vertical”: “ranking ... serves as the principal controlling factor of social relations in Japan” (p. 31). In positive-politeness cultures, social relations are based on solidarity and reciprocity and the minimization of status differences.

Address in Japanese and English

The differences between negative- and positive-politeness cultures are reflected in their address systems. In Japan, surnames (followed by the honorific suffixes *-san*, *-kun*, *-chan* etc.) are used to address even close friends and children, though close women friends and children also use given names. Men who have known each other for decades may never address each other by given name. In Japanese society, only a few kinds of relationships are regarded as equal, for example close friends of the same age. In a hierarchical society like Japan’s, the open expression of status differences is not only normal but often obligatory.

In English, there are two main choices of address form: use of first name (FN) and use of title (Mr., Ms., Mrs., Miss, Dr., Professor etc.) with last name (TLN). There are three main combinations of address forms between two speakers: reciprocal FN, reciprocal TLN and non-reciprocal address — one person gives FN and receives TLN. Reciprocal use of FN suggests informality or closeness, reciprocal TLN, formality or lack of familiarity. Non-reciprocal address marks unequal power between two speakers based on attributes such as age, status (Brown & Ford, 1961) or gender (Rubin 1981; Wolfson, 1989; Romaine, 1994).

Brown & Gilman: Second person pronouns of address

A parallel address system to FN/TLN in many European languages is the use of two second person pronouns, the familiar “you” and polite “you.” English used to have two second person pronouns: “you” and “thou.” “Thou” was used for intimates and has

disappeared except for religious uses. French has polite *vous* and familiar *tu*, German, *Sie* and *du*, Spanish, *usted* and *tu*, and Swedish, *ni* and *du*, and other European languages have equivalent pairs.

One of the earliest studies of address forms was written by Roger Brown and Albert Gilman (1960). They studied the uses of second person pronouns in French, German, Italian and Spanish. This choice between the two pronouns parallels the choice between FN and TLN except that it is more difficult to avoid than the choice between FN and TLN which can be avoided by “no-naming.” Brown and Gilman call these pronouns T and V from the Latin familiar pronoun *tu* and polite *vos*. According to Brown and Gilman, the way the pronouns are used reflects two dimensions of relationships in society: power and solidarity. Non reciprocal T and V is used between speakers of unequal power based on wealth, age, sex, position in society or the family. In egalitarian societies, speakers choose either reciprocal T or reciprocal V according to how close or distant they are — the degree of “solidarity” between them. Brown and Gilman (1960) believe that the “solidarity semantic” is winning out over the “power semantic.” In other words, use of reciprocal address is becoming more common. Brown and Gilman gave a questionnaire to speakers of the languages in their study, asking them what forms of address they would use in six different situations: waiter-customer, employer-employee, parent-son, and master-servant. Only 11% of the answers indicated non-reciprocal address, but a trace of the “power semantic” remains in the rule that the speaker with higher status always initiates a change from reciprocal V to reciprocal T.

Address in American English (FN/TLN)

In a study of the use of FN and TLN in American English, Roger Brown & Marguerite Ford (1961) examined the use of address forms in three contexts: modern American plays, a Boston business firm, and between adults and children in England. They found non-

reciprocal address between adults and children, and between adults when there was an age difference of at least 15 years. Reciprocal TLN was usual between newly introduced adults, but it could change to reciprocal FN in the space of only five minutes. However, the speaker with the higher status always initiated the change. In the Boston business firm, reciprocal FN predominated. In most cases of non-reciprocal address, the speaker receiving TLN was at a higher organizational level and older.

Summarizing this study and the earlier study of T and V (Brown & Gilman, 1960), Brown & Ford conclude that from Scandinavia to Japan, familiar forms are used:

1. reciprocally with people one is close to or to show friendliness or solidarity, and
2. non- reciprocally to inferiors.

Polite forms are used:

1. reciprocally where there is a formal or distant relationship, and
2. non-reciprocally to superiors.

When polite forms are used reciprocally, the person with higher status initiates a change to reciprocal use of familiar forms. A person of lower status never uses a more familiar form of address than the person of higher status. They believe that these may be linguistic universals.

Ervin-Tripp (1969) carried out a study of American address forms based on observations of usage in a western American academic community. She created a flow-chart to represent the choices made in deciding whether to use FN or TLN. The first decision is whether the addressee is a child or an adult. A child will always be first-named. In the case of an adult, the following circumstances will lead to the choice of TLN: a status-marked setting such as a formal faculty meeting; a setting which is not status marked but where the other person is at least 15 years older and has not suggested the use of reciprocal FN. The following circumstances will lead to the choice of FN: the setting is not status marked and the

other person is a friend or colleague who is not older or of higher status; the other person is older or has higher status but has suggested the use of reciprocal FN. To summarize: Children are first-named, TLN is used in formal settings, people who have higher rank or who are at least 15 years older are given TLN until they suggest reciprocal FN.

Address and gender

A number of writers have noted how the gender of the speaker or addressee can influence the choice of address form (Kramer, 1975; Rubin, 1981; Wolfson, 1989). Kramer (1975) noted that women in American society have a far more limited repertoire of address forms to use for men than men for women. She examined use of address forms in recent literature, and in encounters between sales clerks and customers. Women of all ages and young men were more likely to receive terms of endearment, such as “honey” and “dear” rather than “ma’am” or “sir,” while older men were always addressed as “sir.”

Rubin (1981) examined forms of address that college students used with their professors in an American university to see if there was any difference in the way male and female professors were addressed. Female professors, particularly those aged from 26 to 33, were more often first-named than male professors by both male and female students, but the tendency was stronger among female students. Rubin noted that women are even more likely to regard other women as having lower status than men are.

In a study of address forms in her own university, Wolfson (1989) reported data collected of how male and female faculty were addressed by secretaries and other office staff. She found that female and younger male faculty were mostly referred to by FN, while older male faculty nearly always received TLN. She gave an actual example of a male and female faculty member of approximately the same age and status arriving for an appointment with a senior

administrator and being announced by the receptionist as “Mary and Dr. Smith.” She concluded that female professors were regarded by office staff as having lower status than male professors, even when age and rank were similar.

Asymmetrical address

In societies which place value on at least a show of egalitarianism, the use of asymmetrical address between adults is generally viewed negatively. Writers use the words “condescension” or “condescending” to describe non-reciprocal address (Brown & Ford, 1961, p. 239 Braun, 1988, p. 93). Wolfson (1989) states that “...non-reciprocal address forms, in English and other languages, carry with them the implication that the addressee is somehow subordinate to the speaker” (p. 170), and also that non-reciprocal address used for women is always “suspect” (p. 171). Romaine (1994 p. 117) goes further, saying it shows a “discriminatory” attitude. When used between races in the context of colonialism or racial segregation, non-reciprocal address is described as “galling” (Brown & Gilman, 1960, p. 264) or like speaking to “a small child” (Fasold, 1990, p.23).

Linguistic variation in address

Braun (1988), in a book-length study of address forms, reviewed the studies by Brown & Gilman, Brown & Ford, and Ervin-Tripp. According to Braun, the models they proposed give the impression that address can be accounted for by a simple set of universal rules and they do not take enough account of linguistic variation, such as regional and social class variation. The rules in their model fit industrialized countries where the standard language has been well spread throughout the country by mobility of the population and by the mass media. In countries which are not industrialized and where the standard language is not well spread, there can be wide regional differences in use of address forms.

When people from different regions talk to each other, reciprocal and non-reciprocal address may not have the meanings of the Brown model. For example in Jordan, address forms can vary even within a few kilometers. A high status person from a city may use a familiar form to a person of lower status in the country. The same form may be used in return, not because of a perception of equal status, but because in that region, the form is used for a wider range of relationships. In Italy, there are three pronouns of address: *Lei*, *voi*, and *tu*. *Voi* is only used in some regions, so a pair of speakers from different regions could use *voi-tu* or they could use *voi-Lei* and these pairs could be intending reciprocal degrees of respect. In Turkey, a non-polite address, the word for “uncle,” was used with polite intention by informants who believed that they were being polite, saying “... I treat him like my own uncle! ...” (p. 49). Braun reports a study by another researcher in a Mexican village where Indians were given V by Mexicans even though they were regarded as inferior. The researcher speculated that the form was used to preserve a social distance.

Braun points out that sometimes the choice of address form is unrelated to the status of the addressee or the relationship between the speakers: an address form may be chosen to project a certain self-image. For example, some years before his study, there was a trend among young Germans to address everyone with the familiar *du* not because of how they viewed the status of the other speaker or the relationship, but because they wanted to present an image of egalitarianism.

Braun (1988) claims that the exceptions to the Brown/Gilman, Brown/Ford rules show that “Universals in the field of address may be very few, and...of a rather trivial nature” (p. 304) but he may be overstating his case. In Italy, for example, *voi* may be going out of use (Bates & Benigni, 1975). The study in Mexico was carried out in 1964 and the Indians’ response to the V form was not recorded. However, Braun’s concept of “disturbances” (p. 304) in address

systems is relevant to the study of intercultural communication.

Cross-cultural address

Ronowicz (1992) explains why Polish learners of Australian English can seem excessively formal in English and may have trouble using English address forms. Polish has *pan/pani* for Mr./Ms. and sir/madam. When someone is addressed for the first time in Polish, TLN is used, and after that, T alone (*pan/pani*). FN is reserved for family and very close friends. Using FN except to family members and close friends is extremely rude and is only done when the speaker deliberately intends to offend. Because of this, Polish students may be uncomfortable with the wide use of FN in Australian English. Ronowicz advises that they should be taught that in Australia people use FN even with slight acquaintances, and that in many situations FN is equivalent to using *pan/pani* in Polish.

DeLisle (1993) reports an interesting mix of German and American address systems in American university German classes. She compared the use of address forms in German classes with address forms in German universities where address is formal and reciprocal — reciprocity is considered to be very important. Outside universities, inappropriate address has resulted in litigation: A bus driver was fined for calling a student *du*, and using *du* to a policeman is punished by fines averaging over \$1000. Students and teachers call each other by TLN and *Sie*, the formal “you.” In American university German classes, the most common pattern is non-reciprocal FN/TLN: teachers use FN to students and receive TLN, but both sides use *Sie*. Most Germans feel that FN should not be used with *Sie*, and they consider nonreciprocal FN/TLN in universities to be unacceptable. (In a note at the end of her paper, however, DeLisle reports that she was told several times by students and professors that some older male professors use FN+*du* with female students only.) DeLisle feels that students of German in American universities should be made aware of the reciprocity of the

German system even if they prefer to stay with the non-reciprocity of the American system in class.

Some writers warn that in cross-cultural interactions, people from positive-politeness cultures may be too casual with people from negative-politeness cultures: "the latter may well be offended by the over-familiarity of the former." (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 230). Scollon and Scollon (2001) give a hypothetical example of an American and a Chinese businessman doing business together. The Chinese prefers to use reciprocal TLN and the American, reciprocal FN. If they both persist, the result is asymmetrical address, with the American in the superior position and the Chinese in the subordinate position. Ervin-Tripp (1969) writes that a foreign teacher in an American university may address a colleague with TLN and be thought aloof or excessively formal while the foreign teacher may feel that FN from his colleagues is "brash and intrusive" (p. 105).

These hypothetical examples of address between people from positive- and negative-politeness cultures work in the opposite direction to what actually happens between Japanese and non-Japanese. Instead of the stereotype of the brash westerner automatically first-naming the Japanese, while the more formal Japanese feels uncomfortable addressing the westerner by anything except TLN, what actually happens is that a Japanese automatically first-names a westerner and expects TLN in return, or in settings including Japanese and non-Japanese, the Japanese addresses non-Japanese by FN and Japanese by TLN.

Method

In order to check the assumption that the Japanese are influenced by television to first-name non-Japanese, more than 200 observations were made of how Japanese and non-Japanese were addressed and referred to on Japanese television between May 2001 and September 2002. A few observations were also taken from

American news programs broadcast on Japanese television in order to compare forms of address. Observations were taken mainly from the channels of the non-commercial station, NHK, and from Channels 4, 6 and 10, but some observations were taken from all of the channels available in Tokyo. Some programs were chosen because they were scheduled to involve non-Japanese. Other observations were taken from random watching of television. When a speaker referred to or addressed a person, the type of address pattern was noted once. If the same speaker used a new pattern for the same addressee or referent, the new pattern was noted once, too. References to people in subtitles were also collected, whether they were labels of the names of people or translations of speech.

For purposes of comparison, the following observations were made of how the Japanese are addressed or referred to on Japanese television.

Use of LN(FN) and FN with (-san) for Japanese

1. The most common pattern is LN(FN)+T (usually *-san*) for adults and LN+T or FN+T (*-san*, *-kun*, or *-chan*) for children.
2. When families are referred to, the first member mentioned (usually the father) is called LN(FN)+T. Then other members are called FN+T (*-san*) to distinguish between the family members.
3. A few young television entertainers and announcers are called by FN+T.

Use LN(FN) and FN without *-san*

1. The deceased are sometimes referred to by LN without *-san*.
2. A few examples were collected of famous deceased adults referred to by FN without *-san* even though their families were not mentioned: “Souseki,” “Chuuhaichi” — the first Japanese to fly, “Hideo” — Noguchi Hideo.
3. In a narrative or documentary style, *-san* and *-masu* verb forms may be dropped whether the people are living or not.

4. Sportspeople are often referred to by LN(FN), or sometimes FN, without *-san*.

Results

The following is a descriptive report of the observations taken from television. They were selected to approximately reflect the proportions of FN and TLN address in the original 200 observations. NHK (non-commercial) channels: Channel 1, Channel 3, Broadcasting Satellite 1 & 2

On the non-commercial channels there have been series of documentaries about the life and work of famous people such as film stars, and academics, both dead and alive. Some of the non-Japanese who were the subjects of these documentaries on NHK in 2001 and 2002 were Rachel Carson, Frank Drake, Rodney Fox, Jane Goodall, Frank Gibney, Donald Keene, Sonja Kowalevksaya, Stephen Hawking, Theo Colborn, Helen Keller, Sean Connery, Audrey Hepburn, Grace Kelly, and Margot Fonteyn.

The figures in Table 1 are from programs about the life and work of academics. There were sixteen men with five deceased, and six women with three deceased.

Table 1

Address and Reference in Documentaries about Academics

	First name address	
	FN	FN+T
Men	1	1
Women	5	3
	Last name address	
	(FN)LN	(FN)LN+T
Men	7	9
Women	2	2

According to the observations on how Japanese are addressed on television, it is acceptable to refer to people without T in documentaries, particularly if they are deceased, and even to use FN alone. Five of the six foreign women academics were referred to by the least respectful FN without T (*-san*, *-sensei*, *-hakushi* or *-hakase* — Ms., Professor, Dr.) but only one of the 16 men. Of the two examples of LN+T for a woman, none were by TV commentators: one was by a studio guest and the other was in a subtitle. Dr. Theo Colborn (aged 75), a pioneer in alerting the public to environmental hormones, was called FN without T throughout the program. Another researcher in the same documentary, a man of about 40, was called “Bowman (LN) *-hakushi*” (Dr. Bowman). The first-naming of women was particularly striking in a program about mathematicians who were all deceased. Of the five programs watched, all presented by the same presenter, the men were all called by LN without T. The only woman mathematician in the series, after her full name was introduced, was referred to by FN only throughout the program.

In the documentary about Rachel Carson, author of “Silent Spring,” she was referred to as “Rachel.” In American documentary film taken during her lifetime, she was referred to as “Carson,” “Rachel Carson,” and “Miss Carson.” In English, she would not be referred to as “Rachel” except by a personal friend. A recent winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, Jodie Williams, was called “Jodie-san” in another program. In a program about Helen Keller, she was referred to, except at the beginning, as “Helen,” but a Japanese man who wrote to her inviting her to Japan, was referred to by LN with *-san*, even though he is also deceased. When scientific topics rather than scientists are the focus of programs, foreign men and women scientists are almost always addressed or referred to by LN (FN) +T.

In programs about the lives of Sean Connery, Margot Fonteyn, Grace Kelly and Audrey Hepburn, they were all referred to by FN alone. In another program about Audrey Hepburn made in

America, the American presenter referred to her as “Audrey Hepburn,” but the Japanese subtitle had only “Audrey,” probably for space reasons, but “Hepburn” alone would have given a better translation of the flavor of the original English.

In regular news reports, foreign men are not first-named. Four winners of the Praemium Imperial Awards were called by FN+LN-*san*. Both statesmen and stateswomen are never first-named on news programs or any other programs (Madeleine Albright, Margaret Thatcher, Condoleezza Rice, Tony Blair, George Bush etc.) Some well-known foreigners in Japan are never first-named, for example the former manager of the Japan Soccer Team, Philippe Troussier, or the C.E.O. of Nissan, Carlos Ghosn.

The following observations were taken from various types of NHK documentaries. In a documentary about education in Britain, schoolteachers were referred to by LN+-*san* but university teachers were referred to with the higher status address LN+-*shi*. It seems that a decision was taken by the program makers to divide these two groups by status. In a documentary about a retirement home for Italian musicians in Italy, all the men were referred to by LN with -*san*, and all the women by FN with -*san*. In another documentary, a Japanese illustrator, whose surname was Anzai, visited folk artists in the American South. He introduced himself to a couple as Anzai, and the wife called him Mr. Anzai. The commentator referred to the couple by their first names. Anzai did not address the couple, but he referred to another artist as Jimmy-*san*. In other words, Anzai expected to be addressed by LN or TLN but expected to use the first names of the artists whose work he was reporting. In a documentary about two (male) photographers who took pictures of the destruction of the World Trade Center, one who was killed was referred to with FN+LN (without -*san*) through the program. The other, who survived, was first referred to by FN+LN, and was subsequently referred to by FN alone.

In a series of French language lessons, the French and Japanese

presenters used reciprocal FN, but in a series of German lessons, a young half-German, half-Japanese woman presenter/teacher was addressed by FN with *-san*, but the Japanese teacher of German was addressed by LN with *-sensei*. Judging from the data from German universities (DeLisle, 1993), this non-reciprocal pattern would be unacceptable in Germany even between student and teacher, let alone between teacher and teacher.

In a program about a Japanese woman TV announcer who married a Frenchman, she was jokingly referred to as “Madame Eriko” by the presenter, supposedly to give a foreign flavor to the address form. In fact, in French “Madame” is never used with FN. It is used with (FN) LN, or it is used alone. The use of FN to produce a supposedly foreign address form produced an address form which does not actually exist in French.

In a long-running drama series, “Sakura,” a Japanese American woman, whose name is Elizabeth Sakura Matsushita, teaches English as an assistant teacher in a Japanese high school. Early in the series, the other teachers discuss how she should be called. In the case of a Japanese woman, there would be no discussion: she would be called “Matsushita-*sensei*” by the students and “Matsushita-*sensei*” or “Matsushita-*san*” by the other teachers. They decide that “Matsushita-*sensei*” would not be “friendly,” but since she is supposed to be ethnically Japanese, they decide that “Sakura” is more appropriate than “Elizabeth.”

There are various problems with this discussion from an English-speaker’s point of view:

1. Why don’t they follow Japanese rules in Japan?
2. Why is it necessary to address a foreign teacher in a more “friendly” way than a Japanese teacher?
3. Why should the choice of address depend on ethnicity?
4. Why don’t they ask her what she wants to be called instead of imposing a form of address on her?

The following are the rules which would probably apply to this

situation in English-speaking countries:

1. "When in Rome, do as the Romans do."
2. Teachers are not called by their first names by high school students.
3. Among the teachers, first names would be used by everyone.

Having decided that she should be called "Sakura-*sensei*," the students actually call her "Elizabeth" in class in Japanese, without -*san* or -*sensei*. A male colleague in his twenties calls her "*o-mae*," whereas she calls him "*Sensei*" or "Katsuragi-*sensei*." It is most unlikely that he would address a female Japanese colleague using "*o-mae*."

One program of a series of English lessons presented by a well-known Japanese interpreter was a welcome contrast to programs such as "Sakura." A video skit was shown where a student in an American university first-named a teacher, mistaking her for a student. On learning that she was a teacher, he was very embarrassed. In the studio, the program presenter advised people who are thinking of going to an American university not to first-name American teachers or to automatically first-name older people generally.

Channel 4

In a series of programs which looks at human interest stories from around the world, there was a news story about the murder of a young man in Australia. The report was given Japanese subtitles. The young man was called "John Smith" (surname changed) in English, but the subtitle read: "John-*san*." In a similar program about psychics finding criminals, the Japanese commentary had "John-*san*" for one of the people in the report. When the man came into the studio, he was addressed as John-*san* by all the TV personalities except one who called him LN with -*san*. In a news report about a death sentence which had just been handed down, one of the murderer's three female accomplices was a woman from the

Philippines. The two Japanese women accomplices were referred to by LN+FN with *-san*, but the Philippina was referred to by FN only with *-san*.

The following are contrasting examples: In a news report about Japanese abductees in North Korea, the bureau chief for Newsweek in Japan was called “Wagner-*shi*,” a higher status address than LN+*-san*. In a science documentary, a male and female scientist were both referred to by LN+*hakushi*.

Channel 6

Foreign entertainers are nearly always called by FN with *-san* on Japanese television, but SEKIGUCHI Hiroshi goes one step further. Kent Gilbert is an American lawyer who is an occasional guest on various programs. On a Sunday morning talk show, Sekiguchi addresses him by his surname alone, “Gilbert.” It would be interesting if Kent Gilbert would call him “Sekiguchi” in return!

In a special news program about passengers aboard one of the hi-jacked airliners on September 11, 2001, two (male) passengers were first referred to by FN+LN with *-san*, and subsequently by LN with *-san*. In the same news program, ten days earlier, one of these passengers was first referred to by FN+LN with *-san*, and subsequently by FN with *-san*. In a program about the athletes Marion Jones and Maurice Green, they were both first referred to by FN+LN. Subsequently, Marion Jones was referred to as “Marion,” and Maurice Green as “Green.”

A British man, Peter Barakan, (early 50s) and a Japanese woman, Yoshikawa Miyoko (late 40s) present CBS documentaries in a program on Channel 6. She addresses him as “Peter-*san*.” He no-names her but he refers to people in the CBS documentaries by LN with *-san*. In other words when speaking Japanese he uses Japanese address forms for the non-Japanese who appear in the CBS documentaries.

In a news report in September 2001, Chandra Levy, a young

woman in America connected to a politician, was introduced as “Chandra Levy-san” and after that, was referred to as “Chandra-san” throughout the news report. On a CNN news broadcast at the same time, she was first referred to as “Chandra Levy” and then after that as “Levy.” The address pattern used on the Japanese news program conformed neither to the American pattern nor to the address pattern used for Japanese.

Channels 8

On Channel 8 news programs, foreigners are referred to by FN+TN with *-san*. Foreign sportspeople are named without *-san*, in the same way as Japanese sportspeople. On a chat show, the singer Michael Jackson was called Michael, without *-san*, which is the way he is usually called in Japan.

On the program “Unbelievable Phenomena,” there was a British dramatization of a true story of an accident on an airplane. All the crew (male) on the Japanese soundtrack were named in the same way as Japanese, by LN or FN+LN, sometimes with T and sometimes without. No-one was first-named. (The English soundtrack was barely audible.) On the same program, there was a dramatization of another true story about a series of murders in England about 100 years ago. All the address forms conformed to Japanese patterns except one: A landlady called her tenant “Mr. Brandon” on the English sound-track (it was the only audible English address form), but this was dubbed into Japanese as “Ernest-san.”

Channel 10

On the popular news program, “News Station,” the presenter, KUME Hiroshi, addressed a foreign guest as Mr. with LN. “Beat” Takeshi referred to an elderly man as “Walker-san” (TLN). On another program, Sylvester Stallone was referred to as “Stallone-san.” Unlike Michael Jackson, he is always referred to by his surname in Japan.

On “Quiz Variety: Amazing Episodes,” Marilyn Monroe was referred to as “Marilyn.” On the same program on the same day, the late cartoonist TEZUKA Osamu was referred to by LN without *-san*. On the same show on another day, Queen Elizabeth was referred to as “Elizabeth-san” by one of the entertainers on the program. Foreign politicians are usually referred to on Japanese television by LN and title, for example “Blair *shushou*” (Prime Minister Blair), and Queen Elizabeth is usually referred to as “Elizabeth *jo-ou*,” but members of the British royal family are sometimes called by FN with *-san* on Japanese television. In other words, foreign politicians are accorded the same status as Japanese politicians, but members of the British royal family are sometimes dropped a status level.

Chinese and Korean names

People with Korean or Chinese names are nearly always addressed in the same way as the Japanese, but when Chinese use western given names, they are usually first-named. An exception is a highly respected financial analyst who speaks native-level Japanese. He is never first-named although he uses a western given name (Channel 10). In a science program on NHK looking at work by schoolchildren from various countries, a boy from Hong Kong who used a western given name was called by FN with *-kun*. There were two Japanese boys with the same surname who were given LN with *-kun*, even though they could be confused. On Channel 11, “The University of the Air,” a channel solely used to broadcast university courses, a well-known teacher of Japanese as a Foreign Language was teaching a western man and a Chinese and a Korean woman (before the period of this study). She called the man by FN with *-san* and the two women by LN with *-san*.

Conclusions

This study of how the Japanese address and refer to non-Japanese on television was undertaken to try to elucidate why the

Japanese address and refer to non-Japanese by their first names even though this is not the usual way to address people in Japan.

The most obvious reason is that English speakers in fact use first names more than the Japanese. Japanese viewers hear non-Japanese first-naming each other in documentaries and movies far more than the Japanese use first-names. It is probably natural for first names to be used in the Japanese commentary and subtitles if viewers can hear the non-Japanese introducing themselves or addressing others by first-name.

Most first-naming of non-Japanese on Japanese television is not so easily justified. In documentaries, if the reporters have local people address them by TLN and give FN in return, viewers are encouraged to believe that non-reciprocal address between Japanese and non-Japanese is acceptable.

TV stations sometimes change address forms for foreigners from the forms used in the original news reports or recordings. This means that the address forms conform neither to Japanese patterns nor to the original patterns. In subtitles and on soundtracks of programs made in English-speaking countries, last-name address in the original English was changed to first-name address in the Japanese.

First-naming of foreigners could be regarded as a Japanese convention. Since the Japanese often address each other according to what they are — a teacher, a company president, an older brother — first-naming of foreigners could be a kind of address form for an out-group: visible foreigners, since Chinese and Koreans are usually not first-named. A problem with this explanation is that it does not apply to all visible foreigners, and foreign women are first-named far more than foreign men.

Asymmetrical address is widely characterized in the literature on address as condescending, but little mention is made of lower status address to one person in settings where everyone else receives higher status address. Yet this is a frequent situation for foreign

entertainers on Japanese television and foreigners living in Japan. The effect of this kind of address is similar to that of non-reciprocal address in that it assigns lower status to one person relative to other people present. When foreign entertainers are first-named on television, viewers are encouraged to believe that using different address forms for foreigners and Japanese is normal.

Some Japanese claim that adding *-san* to a first-name makes the address polite enough, but when foreigners complain about being first-named, it is not the level of politeness but the non-reciprocity they are complaining about. The foreigner is expected to accept being first-named even when the speaker would consider it unacceptable to be first-named in return. To many Japanese, the foreigner's expectation of reciprocity is hard to understand. For one thing, in Japanese address, non-reciprocal address is common and unremarkable. For another, different treatment for foreigners is regarded as common sense. Japan is not a country with a history of absorbing visible minorities. The foreigner is not expected to fit in completely with Japanese customs, and many Japanese expect to meet the foreigner more than half way — to switch to behavior they think will be more comfortable for the foreigner.

It is not always easy to decide what form of address to use even for people from the same culture. The decision is more difficult in situations of cross-cultural communication. Generalized first-naming of foreigners is an over-simple solution which results in asymmetrical address causing discomfort and sometimes resentment. The media in Japan bear a responsibility for encouraging the impression that asymmetrical first-naming is acceptable. Foreign entertainers who allow themselves to be first-named on television contribute to this situation and make it more difficult for foreigners who dislike the practice to object. A foreigner risks being thought pompous if he/she asks for an equal level of formality: "If you expect me to call you Mr. Suzuki, please call me Ms. Smith."

Non-reciprocal first-naming can adversely affect

communication in a variety of situations: in business negotiations (personal communication, P.J. Farrell, August 1998); in Japanese companies which employ non-Japanese in Japan and abroad (Suzuki, 2001; Nathalie, 2001); between Japanese and non-Japanese living and working in Japan (Dillon, 2000; Chavez, 1999), and between students and teachers in classes of English as a Foreign Language and Japanese as a Foreign Language.

On the whole, it would be better for Japanese rules of address to be applied when Japanese is being spoken. If Japanese television stations followed this practice, reciprocal LN with *-san* would be the norm and non-reciprocal address would be much reduced. The general public might then be influenced to choose address forms not based on an addressee's foreignness.

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