

Sociolinguistic Study on Terms of Address:  
Effect of Ascribed and Acquired Factors  
on Speaker and Addressee Gender

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**Abstract**

The present study reports on the pattern of address term use by native speakers of Japanese based on the empirical data. It also focuses on the effect of two types of gender (subject gender and addressee gender) on the system of address. Eighty-five university students participated in the study. They filled out a questionnaire in which terms of address are anticipated for various addressees with combinations of three variables (status, closeness, and addressee gender). The analysis reveals that both male Japanese and female Japanese are strongly influenced by ascribed factor, particularly status. Females are influenced by the ascribed factor, such as addressee gender, as well.

**Key words:** terms of address, gender, pronouns

**Introduction**

The present study reports on the effect of gender on the Japanese system of address. Address terms are linguistic devices used to show deference and politeness and are encoded at the lexico-semantic level in Japanese (Ide, 1982, pp.358-359). This study follows Braun's definition of address terms as words or phrases which denote a speaker's linguistic reference to his or her collocutor(s) (1988, p.7). For example, when a professor is addressed in English, he or she can be denoted by any of the following: the second person pronoun 'you,' his or her first name, and title with last name. The use of the latter two are determined by the status of the speaker relative to the professor. According to Braun (1988), there are two types of address: bound forms and free forms. Bound forms are integrated parts of sentences, such as 'you' in 'Do you like it?' On the other hand, free forms are forms 'outside' the sentence construction and can

precede, succeed, or be inserted into the sentence, as in 'Mr. Smith' in 'Do you like it, Mr. Smith?' (p.10).

Regarding gender, there are two kinds: speaker gender and addressee gender. The speaker gender is the gender of a person who gives terms of address, and the addressee gender is the gender of a person who receives the terms of address. Although the distinction between the concepts of 'gender' and 'sex' is important in some cases, the present study use them interchangeably since the distinction between the socially constructed sex role and biological sex is not the main concern of the study. Gender in the present study only refers to the biological distinction between males and females.

### Terms of Address

Address term systems in some languages are more elaborate than those in other languages. For example, the Japanese address system is more elaborate than that of American English (Hijirida and Sohn, 1983, 1986). The most obvious case is that Japanese has several second person pronouns in a hierarchical relationship while English has only one second person pronoun, 'you' (1986, p.369).

Brown and Gilman (1960) pointed out that West European languages have two forms of pronouns: the T form from Latin *tu* and the V form from Latin *vos* (p.254). The T form of a pronoun is a non-honorific singular form used for in-group members, and the V form is primarily a plural form but is also used as an honorific singular form for out-group members. They claimed that the usage of this T/V system of pronouns is governed by two factors, which they call power and solidarity. The power factor indicates the power relationship in which one person has power over another person to the degree that he or she can control the other person's behavior. The exchange of pronouns in this relationship is nonreciprocal. The person with power receives the V form and returns the T form. On the other hand, solidarity concerns a shared feeling between people, a degree of closeness and intimacy. The pronoun exchange in this relationship is reciprocal. The T form is exchanged mutually.

Japanese second person pronouns do not work the way second person pronouns in West-European languages do. As most of the researchers claim, there are three main second person pronouns in modern Japanese. They are *anata*, *kimi*, and *omae*. According to Harada (1976, P.509), *anata* is standard and polite, *kimi* is chiefly used by men to refer to men of equal or lower social status and *omae* is informal and colloquial. The second person pronouns in Japanese are hierarchical. The three pronouns are *anata*, *kimi*, and *omae* in decreasing order of politeness. As Hijirida and Sohn claim (1986, p.369), while 'you' in English can be used to any

socially superior or inferior person, Japanese does not have any second person pronoun to refer to a socially superior person. That is, Japanese lacks a second person pronoun of deference (Kurokawa 1972, p.234).

English does not have the T/V system of pronouns either, and the power and solidarity of the speaker-hearer relationship cannot be analyzed by the pronoun choice. However, the choice of address terms serves as an indicator. Brown and Ford (1961) found that the principal choice of address in American English is between first name (FN) and title with last name (TLN), with FN roughly analogous to the T form and TLN to the V form.

The American English address system has been investigated in comparison to the Japanese address system by Hijirida and Sohn (1983, 1986). According to them, American English is much less sensitive than Japanese to the power variables such as age, sex, rank, and status. It is also much less sensitive to group solidarity (1986, p.365). American English, however, is more sensitive to solidarity variables, such as intimacy and casualness.

### Japanese Terms of Address

The Japanese address system itself has been investigated by several researchers (e.g., Befu, 1958; Kurokawa, 1972; Harada 1976; Russell, 1981; Ide 1982; Hijirida and Sohn 1983, 1986; Hamada, 1988; Suzuki, 1978; among others).

The address terms which can be used in Japanese are mainly nouns and pronouns (Harada, 1976; Ide, 1982; and Hijirida and Sohn 1983, 1986). Nouns include first name, last name, full name, and their combinations with titles. The Japanese titles consist of honorific titles (HT) and professional titles (PT). Honorific titles approximate the use of 'Mr.,' 'Mrs.,' 'Miss,' or 'Ms' in English. Some examples of the HTs in Japanese are listed in (1). The romanization of Japanese in the present study follows the system used in Jordern and Noda (1987).

(1) Honorific Titles (HT) (Harada, 1976, p.509)

1. -sama (very polite)
2. -sensee (for teachers, details to be explained)
3. -san (average)
4. -kun (mostly used for men)
5. -tyan (diminutive)

Unlike 'Mr.,' 'Mrs.,' 'Miss,' or 'Ms' in English, the Japanese honorific titles do not have a gender distinction or marital status distinction. In other words, they can be used for both men and women, and for both single and married people. For example, *Tanaka-san* can be used for

'Mr. Tanaka,' 'Mrs. Tanaka,' 'Miss Tanaka,' or 'Ms Tanaka.' In addition, unlike 'Mr.,' 'Mrs.,' 'Miss,' or 'Ms' in English, these Japanese HTs can be attached to last names, first names, and full names. Furthermore, Japanese HTs are hierarchical: the HTs in (1) are listed in the decreasing order of deference (Hijirida and Sohn 1986).

The title *sensee* has a peculiar status. According to Harada (1976, p.509), contemporary usage of *sensee* is confined to a person who is respected for his or her capabilities, mainly in intellectual work. The word *sensee* as a common noun primarily means 'teacher.' As a title though, it covers not only teachers and professors but also authors, movie directors, artists, medical doctors, politicians, and so on.

Professional titles are formed from words indicating institutionally defined positions. Some examples are listed in (2).

(2) Professional Titles (PT) (Harada, 1976, p.509)

a. In a company.

syatyoo	'president'
butyoo	'section chief'

b. In a university.

gakutyoo	'president'
kyoozyu	'professor'

These titles are used either independently or as a suffix to a name. Instead of using names, one can also address people by personal pronouns. Some examples of commonly used second person pronouns are listed in (3).

(3) Second person pronouns (Harada, 1976, p.509)

anata	(standard and polite)
kimi	(chiefly used by men to refer to men of equal or lower social status)
omae	(informal and colloquial, somewhat pejorative)

### Gender and Terms of Address

Gender effect in terms of address was reported by Remenyi (1994). She investigated the effect of gender, age, educational background, status, and spatial distance in an office on the choice of pronoun between the T form and the V form in Hungarian. She reported that female subjects were mostly influenced by ascribed characteristics such as sex and age in their choice;

and males were more sensitive to acquired characteristics such as schooling, spatial distance, and the difference in rank as the influencing factors in their choice of T/V forms.

## Objectives and Research Questions

Remenyi's findings led to the research questions of the present study. The research questions are threefold:

(1) What is the pattern of address in Japanese? (2) Is there subject gender effect on the pattern of address? (3) Are males influenced by acquired characteristics more than ascribed characteristics? Are females influenced by ascribed characteristics more than acquired factors?

## Method

Eighty-five native speakers of Japanese participated in the study: 53 males and 32 females. They were university students in Japan. The subjects were asked to fill out a questionnaire about a choice of address terms. The questionnaire was constructed following the pattern of the Discourse Completion Test created by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984).

The subjects were asked to fill in the blanks with a word or a phrase according to the addressees provided, thereby providing the address term anticipated. Examples of the questions follow with a morpheme by morpheme gloss and an idiomatic English translation for each. In the gloss, TM indicates Topic Marker and QM indicates Question Marker. The description of the task is given in English, but the actual questionnaire for the subjects was written in Japanese.

### (4) Discourse Completion Test

DIRECTIONS: Fill in the blank of the Japanese sentences below with appropriate words according to the two situations given.

Situation I: You want to ask each person in the following if the pen belongs to him or her.

You are talking to your friend, *Yosiko Tanaka*.

You say: "Kono pen wa \_\_\_\_\_ no (desu ka)?"  
this pen TM \_\_\_\_\_ of (is QM)

'Is this pen yours?'

Situation II: You want to tell each person in the following that the telephone call was for him or her.

You are talking to your friend, *Yosiko Tanaka*.

You say: “Denwa wa \_\_\_\_\_ ni desita.”  
 telephone TM \_\_\_\_\_ for was

‘The telephone call was for *you*.’

Two situations were provided in this task (see examples above). In each situation, 12 different addressees were provided. Although the same set of 12 addressees was used for both situations, the order of addressees was rearranged for the second situation in order to avoid the influence of order on the subjects’ judgement.

Three variables, status, closeness, and gender, were manipulated among addressees. The variable of status had three levels: higher, equal, and lower. Closeness had two levels: close and not-close. Gender had two levels: male and female. Each of 12 possible combinations ( $3 \times 2 \times 2$ ) was assigned to each of the 12 addressees. For example, Item 1 of Situation I (I-1 in Table 1) and Item 12 of Situation II (II-12 in Table 1) is the same addressee containing the same combination of three variables: a male addressee of higher status in a close relationship.

**Table 1**

*Variables manipulated for each addressee*

Addressees in Situation-Item #	Variables		
	Status	Gender	Closeness
I -1, II -12	Higher	Male	Close
I -2, II -6	Higher	Male	Not-Close
I -11, II -11	Higher	Female	Close
I -12, II -5	Higher	Female	Not-Close
I -3, II -10	Equal	Male	Close
I -4, II -4	Equal	Male	Not-Close
I -9, II -9	Equal	Female	Close
I -10, II -3	Equal	Female	Not-Close
I -5, II -8	Lower	Male	Close
I -6, II -2	Lower	Male	Not-Close
I -7, II -7	Lower	Female	Close
I -8, II -1	Lower	Female	Not-Close

Table 1 provides an overview of the variables manipulated for each addressee.

Situation I tested the address terms in the possessive case and Situation II tested the object of preposition, although both positions are pre-particle position of *no* and *ni*.

### Analysis

The data of the study was analyzed descriptively as well as statistically. First, the frequency of same address terms were counted. Since there were many variations of terms of address used by subjects, they were categorized into seven word groups: (1) Last name with or without title (LN(+T)), (2) First name with or without title (FN(+T)), (3) Pronouns (Pro), (4) Full name with or without title (FLN(+T)), (5) Title only (T/only), (6) other choices (Other), and (7) No response (NR). Since the first three groups covered the majority of the responses, I mainly analyzed these three word groups.

For the statistical analysis, a series of 5-way ANOVAs were performed in order to test the effect of variables and their interactions with regard to these three major response choices, LN(+T), FN(+T), and Pro. In order to focus only on effects that were substantial, the Alpha level was set at .01. Further, because higher-order interaction effects are extremely unreliable and difficult to interpret, 4- and 5-way interactions are not reported. Since there were only two 4-way and 5-way interactions, this does not leave out any major part of the results.

Since there were originally seven response choices (LN(+T), FN(+T), Pro, FLN(+T), T/only, Other, and NR), the analysis of three major response choices were not totally independent of each other, nor totally redundant. For each address term, the frequency of each choice was counted. The range of the scores was 3-pointed from 0 to 2, since there were two situations for each of 12 addressees. 0 meant that the certain address term was not used in either of the two situations. 1 indicated that the address term was used in one of the two situations, and 2 indicated that the address term was used in both situations.

Although applying ANOVA to such a restricted scale of 3-pointed range is controversial, it was used in this study for the following reasons. First of all, validity of the use of ANOVA in an even more restricted scale of 2-pointed range was reported by Lunney (1970). Other researchers also reported that the number of the values did not significantly influence the results (Bevan, Denton, and Myers 1974; Donaldson, 1968; Hsu and Feldt, 1969; Lindquist, 1953; Myers and Well, 1991; among others). Secondly, the ANOVA is a robust analysis "with respect to the assumptions of normality of distribution and homogeneity of error variance" (Winer, 1971 p.167). Finally, because the alpha-level of the present study was set very conservatively at .01 level, the results of the ANOVA only showed the very significant ones. Degrees of freedom in

the results of the present study was around  $F(2, 117)$ , which is three times more than the example (40 error df) shown in the study reported by Lunney (1970). It means that the data of the present study has three times more tolerance to the effect of the restricted range of the scale.

## Results

The following are the results for each variable.

### *Status*

Table 2 shows that LN(+T) was used almost half of the time no matter what the level of the addressee was. No major difference was found regarding the use of LN(+T) for status variable. The difference of the male pattern and female pattern of address term choice was not significant.

**Table 2**  
*LN(+T) Use in Status Variable*

addressee status	Higher	Equal	Lower
subject gender			
Male	.81	.85	.92
Female	1.02	.90	1.15
$F(2, 234) = .38$		$p = .69$	

Unlike the use of LN(+T), FN(+T) and pronouns were used differently according to the status of the addressees. For higher status addressees, FN(+T) and Pro were rarely used. For equal and lower status addressees, however, FN(+T) and Pro were used significantly more (see Table 3 and Table 4). This tendency was observed both in males and females and no significant difference was found between the male pattern and female pattern of use of address terms.

**Table 3***FN(+T) and Status Variable*

addressee status	Higher	Equal	Lower
subject gender			
Male	.08	.33	.33
Female	.04	.49	.34
F(2, 242)=3.5		p=.03	

**Table 4***Pronouns and Status Variable*

addressee status	Higher	Equal	Lower
subject gender			
Male	.02	.50	.57
Female	.02	.42	.39
F(2, 234)=.31		p=.74	

*Closeness*

Table 5 shows that LN(+T) was used differently depending on the status of the addressees. LN(+T) was used about 30 percent more often for the not-close addressees than for close addressees (Table 5). FN(+T) was used even more frequently for the close addressees than for not-close addressees (Table 6). Unlike LN(+T) and FN(+T), the frequency of pronoun use was about the same for addressees of both close and not-close addressees (Table 7). This tendency was observed both in males and females and no significant difference was found between the male pattern and female pattern of use of address terms.

**Table 5***Closeness and LN(+T)*

addressee closeness	Close	Not close
subject gender		
Male	.71	1.01
Female	.77	1.27
F(1, 117)=.9	<i>p</i> =.08	

**Table 6***Closeness and FN(+T)*

addressee closeness	Close	Not close
subject gender		
Male	.47	.02
Female	.52	.06
F(1, 121)=.99	<i>p</i> =.32	

**Table 7***Closeness and Pronoun*

addressee closeness	Close	Not close
subject gender		
Male	.34	.38
Female	.24	.25
F(1, 121)=.62	<i>p</i> =.43	

*Addressee gender*

The pattern of address term choice was different depending on the gender of subjects. Significant difference was found between males and females regarding the use of LN(+T) and FN(+T). Males used LN(+T) with about the same frequency for both male and female addressees. On the other hand, females used it about 30% more for males than for females (Table 8). Like LN(+T), FN(+T) was used about with the same frequency for both male and female addressee by male subjects. However, female subjects used it about five times more frequently for female addressees than for male addressees (Table 9).

**Table 8***Addressee Gender and LN (+T)*

addressee gender	male	female
subject gender		
Male	.84	.88
Female	1.22	.82
F(1, 117)=13.18		<i>p</i> =.0004

**Table 9***Addressee Gender and FN (+T)*

addressee gender	male	female
subject gender		
Male	.22	.27
Female	.09	.50
F(1, 121)=11.8		<i>p</i> =.0008

Unlike LN(+T) and FN(+T), no significant difference was observed between male pattern and female pattern regarding the addressee gender. Both males and females used pronouns slightly more frequently for male addressees than for female addressees.

**Table 10**

*Addressee Gender and Pronouns*

addressee gender	male	female
subject gender		
Male	.43	.28
Female	.29	.20
F(1, 121)=.01	p=.92	

## Discussion

In this section, the results of the analyses are discussed as they relate to Research Questions 1-3 and to previous work.

*Research question 1:* What is the pattern of address by subjects?

A brief review of the findings is presented at the beginning of each section and the discussion follows. The following section is organized variable by variable.

*Status.* Subjects showed two different patterns of address term use depending on the addressee status: (1) a pattern for High and (2) a different pattern for Equal and Low. When addressing high status individuals, titles with or without last names [(LN+)T] were mostly used. In this case, LN was the optional. On the other hand, when addressing equal and low status individuals, LN(+T), FN(+T), and Pro were used.

Table 11

*Status*

Status	Choice
High	(LN+)T
Equal	LN(+T), FN(+T), Pro
Low	LN(+T), FN(+T), Pro

LN<sub>s</sub>, whether with or without titles, were more popular choice than FN(+T) and Pro no matter who the addressee was. When speaking to high status individuals, FN<sub>s</sub> and Pro<sub>s</sub> were not used, so LN<sub>s</sub> seem to be a more popular choice. However, among these three levels of addressees, LN<sub>s</sub> were used more frequently for lower status individuals than for equal and high status individuals.

Different titles were used depending on the level of status. Titles used for high status individuals were either *sensee* meaning 'teacher' or *kyooju* meaning 'professor.' Equal and lower status individuals received titles such as *-san* and *-kun*. LN was used for individuals of any level of status and the use of LN seems not to be the crucial way of showing the acknowledgement of the status difference. Instead, titles seemed to play an important role in showing the acknowledgment of status. Thus, the variations for equal and lower status individuals were perhaps very similar. High status individuals received T/only as frequently as titles with LN<sub>s</sub>. Titles such as *sensee* and *kyooju* were used by themselves, without last names. When the addressee is a higher status individual, T/only sounds more polite to native speakers of Japanese in some cases since reference to addressee's name may be considered to be rather direct and can be even impolite. This finding also seems to support the claim by Brown and Levinson (1978) in their Politeness Theory regarding the strategy of impersonalization (p.190). They write "In very many cultures one may not politely address people by name" (p.204). They describe the examples in Tamil claiming that "only juniors or status or caste inferiors may ever be addressed by name, and to others the choice of name instead of titles would encode insult" (p.204). In Japanese, use of names by themselves may be considered to be extreme insults, whereas the names with titles are acceptable. However, the use of names with titles may sound more familiar and friendly, but at the same time can sometimes be too friendly, if they are used as terms of address rather than as terms of reference used for the third person.

Status influenced the use of FN(+T) and Pro as well. FN(+T) was used more frequently when addressing low and equal status individuals than when addressing high status individuals.

High status individuals did not receive FN(+T) very frequently. Thus, FN(+T) is probably considered to be the sign of non-superiority. The variations of FN(+T) used for equal and low status individuals are FN+kun, FN+san, FN+tyan, and FN only. As for the use of Pro, it was used for low and equal status individuals, but not for high status individuals. Pro seems to be the sign of non-superiority, too. The varieties of Pro used for Low and Equal status are Anata, Anta, Kimi, Omae, and Omee. Suzuki (1978) proposed the rules of Japanese terms of address as the following:

1. a speaker cannot use a second person pronoun when addressing a superior;
2. a speaker cannot use just the individual's name when addressing a superior;
3. a speaker cannot use the status term (kinship term in family interaction) when addressing an inferior.

Regarding rule 1, the data of the present study showed the subjects are following this rule. They showed little use of pronouns (only 0.5% to 1.2%) when responding to addressees of higher status, whereas the choice of Pro was one of the major choices (15.6%-26.6%) when responding to the addressees of equal and lower status.

In addition, the data from this study showed that inferiors were not the only ones who did not receive status terms. Status-equals also did not receive status terms. For example, the word *senpai* meaning senior of the group was used as a choice of T/only (title only). T/only was almost never used (0.9% at most) when responding to the addressees of Equal and Lower status, whereas it was used as frequently as 40.8% when responding to the addressees of higher status. Actually, T/only was the most popular choice (as frequent as 84.4%) when responding to addressees in higher status. The data showed that T/only used neither by inferiors, nor by status-equals. Although Suzuki (1979) uses superior vs. inferior as a dividing line, the data of the study seems to have revealed that the determining factor was superior vs. non-superior. The main difference between the first grouping (superior vs. inferior) and the second grouping (superior vs. non-superior) is that the first one leaves out status equals, whereas the second grouping includes status equals in non-superior. Therefore, the revised version of the rules for the Japanese terms of address is proposed as the following:

1. a speaker cannot use a second person pronoun when addressing a superior;
2. a speaker cannot use just the individual's name when addressing a superior;
3. a speaker cannot use the status term (kinship term in family interaction) when addressing a non-superior.

Use of pronouns in Japanese, perhaps, helps to satisfy the role of “negative face” in the sense Brown and Levinson (1978, p.13) used in their Politeness Theory. The use of Japanese pronouns certainly is the tool to “be unimpeded in one’s action” (1978, p.13). Therefore, it may perhaps be acceptable that the high-status individuals use them and show that there is distance between the interlocutors, but not vice-versa. Actually, the use of pronouns, especially *anata*, which is considered to be a polite pronoun may work effectively to maintain the difference between the speaker and the hearer. As Kurosawa (1972) claims, Japanese second person pronouns are not deferential, thus their use may not certainly satisfy the positive face.

*Closeness.* Subjects showed two different patterns of address term use depending on the addressee closeness. In addressing close individuals, FN(+T) was mainly used. On the other hand, LN(+T) was mainly used addressing not-close individuals. Choice of FN(+T) indicates that the interaction is occurring in a close relationship. This choice is somewhat similar to the English system of address.

Significant 3-way interaction was observed: Closeness interacted with Addressee Gender and Subject gender. The Closeness effect was smallest when female subjects were responding to female addressees than any other dyads. Closeness influenced the address term use least when female subjects were addressing female addressees with respect to the use of FN(+T). In other words, Japanese females used FN(+T) to other females regardless of the distance of the relationship. For Japanese females, being female might be one part of closeness in the relationship whether they had previously known the addressee or not.

*Addressee Gender.* Addressee gender influenced the subjects differently depending on the subject gender. When male speakers were responding to female addressees, they tended to use LN(+T), FN(+T) or Pro depending on the other traits of the addressees. Male speakers chose the same address term for both male addressees and female addressees. On the other hand, female speakers chose different address terms depending on the addressee gender. When female speakers responded to male addressees, they mainly used LN(+T), whereas when they responded to female addressees, they mainly used FN(+T).

In addition, the use of Pro was more frequent when responding to male addressees ( $M=.34$ ) than when responding to female addressees ( $M=.23$ ),  $F(1,121)=23.72$ ,  $p<.0001$ . The use of Pro was most popular in male-male interactions (.43).

**Table 12**

*Use of Pronoun (Maximum = 2.0)*

	Male	Female
Male	.43	.23
Female	.29	.20

The varieties of Pro used in male-male interactions were mainly *kimi* and *omae*. The following is the most common pronoun choice in interaction of each combination.

**Table 13**

*Pronoun Choice (frequency)*

Subjects	Addressee Gender			
	Male		Female	
Male	omae	66.2% ( 86)	kimi	40.0% (34)
	kimi	24.6% ( 32)	omae	36.4% (31)
	anata	5.4% ( 7)	anata	18.8% (16)
	anta	3.1% ( 4)	anta	2.4% ( 2)
	omee	0.7% ( 1)	omee	2.4% ( 2)
Total	100.0% (130)		100.0% (85)	
Female	anata	54.5% ( 30)	anata	75.0% (30)
	kimi	25.5% ( 14)	anta	12.5% ( 5)
	anta	20.0% ( 11)	kimi	12.5% ( 5)
Total	100.0% ( 55)		100.0% (40)	

*Anata* is used by female speakers. *Omae* is used by male to male and *Kimi* is used by males or to male by males and females, but not in female-female interaction. The frequency of pronoun use was 215 times by males and 105 times by females. Males used pronouns as twice as often as females did.

The results relating to three variables under Research question 1, Status, Closeness, and Addressee gender, appear to have revealed that status strongly influenced both males and females of Japanese. Closeness, however, influenced males more strongly than females. Addressee gender, on the other hand, strongly influenced females, but not males. Therefore, the influence of the three variables are determined as the following. For males, Status first, Closeness second, and Addressee gender third. For females, Status first, Addressee gender second, and Closeness third.

Male        Status > Closeness > Addressee gender

Female      Status > Addressee Gender > Closeness

*Research question 2*: Is there subject gender effect on the pattern of address?

Female subjects consistently used LN(+T) more frequently than male subjects did. In the ranking test, LN(+T) was evaluated by native speakers as a more polite choice than FN(+T). However, male subjects used FN(+T) and Pro equally often for Equal and Lower status addressees.

The results of the study revealed that both males and females used LN(+T) most frequently for addressees of any status. Males chose Pro second and FN(+T) third, whereas females chose FN(+T) second and Pro third. However, females used FN(+T) and Pro virtually identical for lower status addressees.

Females used LN(+T) more often for male addressees than for female addressees. That is, female subjects were more sensitive to the addressee gender than male subjects with respect to the use of LN(+T). In addition, female subjects were more sensitive to addressee gender than any other subject group with respect to the use of LN(+T). Interestingly, female subjects were least sensitive to closeness when addressing female addressees with respect to the use of FN(+T). When females are addressing females, the difference of response pattern between close and not-close was small. That is, female considered female counterparts as close and they chose the address term of closeness, that is FN(+T). In addition, female subjects were most sensitive to addressee gender among four subject groups with respect to the use of FN(+T).

As the literature indicates, female respondents chose higher level of politeness forms of ad-

dress in general than males did. In addition, females chose higher level of politeness forms of address to male addressees than to female addressees. Female-female interaction may be considered to be lower in politeness level, however, close terms of address were used in such exchanges. The findings of the present study showed that it was females, not males, who used more lower-level politeness forms to women.

*Research question 3:* Are males influenced by acquired characteristics more than ascribed characteristics? Are females influenced by ascribed characteristics more than acquired factors?

Remenyi (1994) investigated the effect of gender, among others, on the choice of pronoun between the T form and the V form in Hungarian. She reported that female subjects were mostly influenced by ascribed characteristics such as sex and age in their choice; and males were more sensitive to acquired characteristics such as schooling, spatial distance and the difference in rank as a influencing factors in their choice of T/V forms. According to Remenyi (1994), status and closeness are acquired factors and addressee gender is an ascribed factor. The results of the present study partially support Remenyi's findings that males are influenced more by acquired factors than ascribed factors; and females are influenced more by ascribed factors than acquired factors. The data of male Japanese support Remenyi's claim, but the data of female Japanese do not. The results of the present study showed that males were influenced more strongly by status and closeness, which are acquired factors, than addressee gender, which is an ascribed factor. Females were, however, influenced more strongly by status, which is an acquired factor, than by addressee gender, which is an ascribed factor.

The present study revealed that both males and females were influenced by the acquired factors strongly. Females were influenced also by ascribed factor significantly. This study partially supports the findings in the Remenyi's study.

### Conclusion

In the present study, a primary analysis of the Japanese system of address based on empirical data was presented and the role of gender in the choice of address terms was examined. The results of the study partially supported the claim by Remenyi (1994). In the present study, both males and females were strongly influenced by ascribed factors, particularly status, and than by acquired factors such as addressee-gender. Since the number of the subjects in the study were not large, the results of the study can not be considered as conclusive. A further study with larger number of subjects will be necessary.

Furthermore, different subject groups need to be tested. In the present study, the subjects were all college students. The situations tested in the questionnaire were also situations familiar to the subjects, such as relationships with professors, classmates, and friends in the club activities. However, different subject groups, such as a group from the business community, may reveal different address term choices, and they need to be tested for more thorough description of the Japanese system of address.

Since the main interest in the present study was to describe the fundamental pattern of address term use and the effect of gender on the choice of address, the focus was placed on systematicity. Therefore, the questionnaires were used in order to facilitate the manipulation and control of the variables. In order to describe the dynamic nature of the Japanese system of address, a study based on natural data with qualitative analysis would be necessary. As Brown and Gilman (1962) noted, the address term choice changes as the quality of the particular relationship changes. This aspect of address term choice was not dealt with in the present study. Further investigation is required in this respect.

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