

# A Comparative Study of Person References in Debate in English and Japanese

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This is one of the series of research for address terms which I have worked on. The aim of this tentative analysis is to compare the use of address terms in Japanese and in English regarding their function for conversational management. Address terms has been a popular topic among sociolinguists. The address terms serves to regulate the turn-taking of the participants. We have seen the employment of address terms and compared their functions in conversation in English and Japanese. We have found that in both language, address terms work likewise. It is found that the frequency of address terms are influenced by the turn-taking system of the language. Talking as possible as one can is important for participants in English conversation. They try to hold the floor and try to take their turn. Consequently, conflict is a common phenomenon. In order to regulate such competition, address terms function. On the contrary, Japanese conversations are designed according to the participants' social factor. According to his or her role and position, the participants control how to participate in the conversation by themselves.

## I Introduction

This is one of the series of research for address terms which I have worked on. The aim of this tentative analysis is to compare the use of address terms in Japanese and in English regarding their function for conversational management. Address terms has been a popular topic among sociolinguists. Some have studied choices of address terms based on the social information (Gilman and Brown, 1958, Brown and Gilman, 1960, and Brown and Ford, 1961). Some researchers have discussed the phenomenon of address variation (Braun, 1988, Wierzbicka, 1992).

The Japanese language has many varieties of personal-referential terms. However, according to the data in Shigemitsu (1998), even though we have various forms of address terms, we do not use them as frequently as we have expected. This tendency becomes more emphasized when we compare the use of address terms in some other languages. The address terms are themselves encoded with social information. Moreover, using it or not will have a different code and function in the course of interaction. Then, address terms can be thought of as directly expressing fundamental attitude that how the speaker categorizes the dyadic partner into an abstract group. It is assumed that the speaker does not use the address terms when he or she avoids categorizing them. On the other hand, regarding from designation, using address terms helps conversation go smoothly.

## II Previous studies

Braun (1988 : 11) suggests to draw a line between syntactically bound forms of address

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**Table 1** : Address variation in Japanese Talk shows

Free forms of address	Bound forms of address
Data 1 (Tamasaburo-san)	Data 1 Tamasaburo-san (anata) gojibun (honorific + self) jibun (lit. self)
Data 2 (Moriyama-san) Uchino-kun)	Data 2 Uchino-san Moriyama-san kono hito (lit. this person) Eigo-geki no kata (a person in English drama + honorific) jibun (lit. self)
Data 3 Morita-san	Data 3 Morita-san
Data 4 -----	Data 4 Ichiro Maki san no youna o-himesama no kakkou-o shita kata (lit. a person who looks like a princess as Ichiro Maki) musume (lit. daughter) watashi (lit. I) jibun (lit. self)

(integrated parts of sentences) and syntactically free forms of address (forms “outside” of the sentence construction; preceding, succeeding, or inserted into the sentence). Braun also suggests that addresses and references are different so they have to be distinct each other<sup>1</sup>.

Table 1 shows how often a Japanese interviewer addresses each guest and what forms are used in the data in the study of Shigemitsu (1998). The data was taken from TV live interview shows. The interviewer interviews a guest who is one of the leading figures in entertainment field. Each interview is 45 minutes program. According to the Braun’s distinctions, free forms of address and bound forms of address are discriminated in the chart.

As you see, even free forms of address tend to be avoided, since only four examples were obtained in the 180-minute program in all. The only essential address term in the data is “Morita-san”<sup>2</sup> in Data 3. Notice that the interviewer never address the actress in Data 4. This avoidance of address may not be limited to this particular interviewer in Japanese conversations.

The addresses in parentheses are said to be irregular usage. In Data 1, the speaker says “Tamasaburo-san” which consists of First name + *san* (Title). The interviewer pretended to be a non-Japanese director saying an utterance which the director could have said to him with a strong foreign accent. In Data 2, with Uchino-kun, Last name + *kun*, the interviewer again pretended to be one of the guest’s friend who returned to Japan from overseas. The way the speaker uses the address terms emphasizes that free forms of address is regarded as an usage of different culture. In data 2, the interviewer called the guest Moriyama-san, once. It is the character’s name that the guest had played in a popular TV drama.

### III The data

The data for the present study are taken from TV debating shows. English data was taken from “The News Hour with Jim Lehrer” which was broadcasted on July 12, 1999. Japanese data was

taken from “*Nichiyo toron kai* (Sunday debate)” which was broadcasted on September 5, 1999. They were videotaped and transcribed. Both programs are similar at the following point. First, participants consists of one chair and a few debater. There are four debaters in The News Hour and there are three debaters in *Nichiyo-Toron kai*. Second, the topic is related to governmental affairs. Finally, both of the data are live shows. The whole length of English data is about 15 minutes long. Japanese data is a 60-minute program. In order to compare the numbers of address terms, first 15 minutes of Japanese data is selected to examine. However, some part are referred as a supplement resource.

In English data, the chair, Margaret Warner and four guests, Senator Edward Kennedy and Senator Bill Frist, Ron Pollack and Karen Ignagni debate on patients right in the United States. The chair, Pollack and Ignagni are at the studio together but senators are in a different place and they join the debate through the monitor. In Japanese data, the chair, Yamamoto, and three members of Diet, Fujimoto, Kamei, and Kawara debate on election campaign for the Prime Minister.

#### IV Analysis and results

##### 4.1 English data

Let us begin with the English data. In English data, as shown in Table 2, 21 address terms are used by the chair in the recording. Each address term is numbered according to the order. The address terms are grouped by syntactically free forms or by syntactically bound forms.

From segment (E 1, E stands for English Data) to segment (E 4), and from Segment (E 8) to Segment (E 11), address terms are used to designate the next speaker: The address terms are used to designate Senator Kennedy and Senator Frist for the next speaker at each turn.

- (E 1) Margaret: Senator Kennedy, what do democrats want out of this ?  
 (E 2) M: Senator Frist, what do republicans want to get out of this ?  
 (E 3)1 M: Senator Kennedy, I hear you both saying what you really care  
 2 about is quality of care for the patients. How profound is the  
 3 major difference between the republican and democratic  
 4 version ?  
 (E 4)M: Senator Frist what does it tell you that these major  
 doctor organizations are supporting the democrats version ?

However, segment 5 and 6 have different features from the above.

- (E 5-6)1 Kennedy: We want to make sure that the working families, middle-  
 2 income families when they go in and by a health  
 3 insurance program that is going to cover themselves  
 4 have the insurance and their family will get what they  
 5 pay for and not gate keepers in the way looking out after  
 6 the bottom=  
 [

7 Margaret right  
 8 Kennedy =line. That’s what this is all about.  
 9 Margaret Senators, let me get Karen Ignagni who represent the  
 10 insurance gate keepers in on this. First of all, what is  
 11 your reaction to the fact that both parties seem to be  
 12 saying the industry needs some regulation ?

**Table 2 :** Address terms in English data

Free forms of address	Bound forms of address
1 Senator Kennedy	
2 Senator Frist	
3 Senator Kennedy	
4 Senator Frist	
5 Senators	6 (5)Senators, let me get Karen Ignagni who represents the insurance....
	7 All right,(eye contact) You (=Ron) represent health care consumer
8 Senator Frist,	
9 Ron	
10 Senator	
11 Senator Frist	12 <u>Karen Ignagni</u> has been trying to get back in
13 Senator Kennedy	14 <u>Karen Ignagni</u> wanted answer....
15 Senator Frist	16 <u>Senator Kennedy</u> said earlier
17 Senators	17 I have <u>two people</u>
18 Senator kennedy	
19 Senator Frist	
20 Senators	21 Miss Ignagni and Mr. Pollack

Around line 5 in segment (E 5-6), the chair, Margaret tries to give a turn to Ignagni. So she tries to end the Kennedy’s utterance and interrupts, saying “Senators.” Nevertheless, the Kennedy does not stop and continues to conclude his talk, saying “That’s what this is all about.” Again, the chair says “Senators” in line 8 to notify them that they should stop here. This “Senators” is not used to designate a participant for the next speaker. This address is used to end the present speaker’s utterance and make them abandon their speakership. Also, we have to notice that the Karen is not addressed. The bound form of address in line 8 “Let me get Karen Ignagni who represents the insurance gate keepers in on this,” is operating to alarm the shift of the speakership. This function is also found in segment (E 7).

(E 7) 1 Margaret: All right, you (Ron=eyecontact) represent health care  
 2 consumers. Where will they come out better. With which of



will have a chance” to Karen. She does not have a chance to talk for a while. In Segment (E 14), the chair, Margaret gives a turn to Karen saying “Karen Ignagni wanted to answer that one point why most of the doctors are supporting The Kennedy bill.”

In segment (E 16), the chair, Margaret, interrupts Frist saying “I’m sorry. Senator Kennedy said earlier...” But she is interrupted and overlapped by Frist. She may try to give a turn to Kennedy. With saying ‘Senator Kennedy’, eventually she shifts the topic which is familiar with Kennedy. Due to this, Kennedy could have easily taken his turn. But Frist never gives up his turn. So this speakership shifting may not succeed. This bound forms of address function to make a speakership shifts with giving a topic which is related to one of the participants. The participant may be preparing to take a next turn. This usage is often found in Japanese data. Let us turn to the Japanese data.

#### 4.2. Japanese data

As in English data, each address term is numbered according to the order. The address terms are grouped by syntactically free forms or by syntactically bound forms. As shown in Table 3, thirteen address terms are used by the chair, Yamamoto, in the recording. As mentioned before, the whole length of this Japanese debate is a 60-minute program. However, in order to control the condition of the data, first 15 minutes are extracted to be examined.

I have observed the use of address terms in several dyadic debates. However, in Japanese data, especially in the dyadic talk, the address terms are never used. This may be because the participants clearly know that who should speak at the moment. In the data for this experiment, there are more than three participants. So we will be able to expect more frequent use of address forms. Now it can be explained that the address terms are rarely used when participants are only two, since it is clear who speaks next and who is holding the topic in the dyadic conversation.

The remarkable difference from the English data is that address terms are used only when designating the next speaker in Japanese data. It may be because there is not overlapping and interrupting in Japanese data. Therefore, it is not necessary to regulate the turn-taking competi-

**Table 3** : Address terms in Japanese data

Free forms of address	Bound forms of address
2 Kawara san	1 <u>Fujimoto san</u> wa
3 Kamei san	
6 Yamamoto san,	4 <u>Kawara san</u> no sakihodo no ohanashi de
Fujimoto san,	5 <u>Kamei san</u> wa kono Obuchi san no...
7 Kamei san	
8 Fujimoto san	
9 Kawara san	
10 Fujimoto san	
11 Kamei san	
13 Kawara san	12 Kono mondai wa <u>Fujimoto san</u> wa...

tion. The chair never has to control the turn-organization. In the data, turns are given relatively fairly to each participant. It can be assumed that the address terms are used just because there are more than three people in the talk.

Second, it is noteworthy that bound forms of address is used to announce that the next topic will belong to a certain participant as in (J 1, J stands for Japanese data).

- (J 1) 1 Yamamoto: Fujimoto san wa Obuchi san o Shiji shite orimasune.  
Mr. Fujimoto is supporting Mr. Obuchi.
- 2 Fujimoto hai  
yes
- 3 Yamamoto kore wa douitta kotokara nanodesuka  
Are there any reasons why you support him ?
- 4 Fujimoto Sakunen no sousai senkyo de...  
Last year's election campaign for Prime Ministers...

This tactics does not direct to the participant but to the topic. We perceive the topic shift which correlates to the speakership shift. In English data, bound forms of address have strong effects and operates as emphasizing the shift of the speakership. Bound forms of address function are effective to show that the present speaker must abandon the speakership and the designated participant is allowed to take a turn. In Japanese data, we do not see any conflicting and disorganized turn-taking pattern. It is not necessary for address terms to function to regulate the speakership. Japanese turn-taking system is designed and situated.

Although this extract is the first 15 minutes of the recording, the rest of the Japanese recording does not have either overlaps and interruptions which we have found in English data, either. So in Japanese data, the chair does not have to use address terms to the present speaker to give a turn to the others.

## V Conclusion

As we have seen, the address terms serve to regulate the turn-taking of the participants. We have seen the employment of address and have compared the function of address terms during debates in English and Japanese. We have found that in both language, address terms work for designating a next speaker to have a smooth turn-taking. It is found that the frequency of address terms are influenced by the turn-taking system of the language. It is important for participants in English conversation to talk and to show enthusiastic attitude of the speakership as possible as he or she can. They try to hold the floor and try to take their turn. Consequently, conflict is a common phenomenon during a debate. In order to regulate such competition, address terms work. On the contrary, Japanese conversation system is designed and situated according to the participants' social factor. According to his or her role and position in a context, participants control how to participate in the conversation by themselves.

### Notes

- 1 His suggestion is supported by showing an example of English, “while the English pronoun of address you does not give much social information when used as bound form, it may reveal a lot about a dyad when used as a free form. “For kinship terms, rules of address and rules of reference may differ.” The English KT grandson is a common form of reference, but will hardly be used as a form of address (the usual nominal variant for addressing a grandson would be first name). (Braun 1988, 11).
- 2 As a standard referential form, the interviewer uses Last name+*san*. That is the expression in which only formality is involved. But as for the Data 1, it is a general habit to refer to a Kabuki actor by first name since their first names are passed on to them by their predecessors and thus their first names show their rank, reputation and ability.

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**Transcribing Convention**

Symbol	Meaning
..	Ellipses indicate talk omitted from the data segment.
[ ]	Square brackets between lines or bracketing two lines of talk indicate the beginning ([) and end (]) of overlapping talk
=	Equal signs are latching symbols. When attached to the end of one line and the beginning of another, they indicate that the later talk was "latched onto" the earlier talk with no hesitation, perhaps without even waiting the normal conversational rhythm or "beat"
Underline	Underlining shows the address forms
????	Question marks indicate that some talk was not audible or interpretable at all
Numbering	For ease of identification in the discussion, speakers are identified by letters, and each line is numbered
(E 1)/(J 1)	E stands for English segment J stands for Japanese segment