

Dimensions of politeness in Japanese**I. Formality, aka performative politeness**

- (1) Expressing politeness (social distance) toward your interlocutors: **formality** or **performative politeness**

		(J&N 1987)	<i>Genki</i>	
(a)	Kaigi-ga ar-u. <i>meeting-NOM exist-NONPAST</i>	informal	/ ‘direct style’ /	‘short form’
(b)	Kaigi-ga ar-imas-u. <i>exist-FORMAL-NONPAST</i>	formal	/ ‘distal style’ /	‘long form’
(c)	Kaigi-ga goza-imas-u. <i>exist.FORMAL-FORMAL-NONPAST</i>	formal+	/ ‘neutral-polite’ /	—

- These three options reflect **increasing social distance**

- (2) Formal style is generally marked by:

- (a) Copula in *des-* form
- (b) Verb suffix *-mas-* (conjugates as irregular verb: *-mas-u*, *-masi-ta*, *-mas-en* NEG, *-masyoo*)
- (c) Adjectives: Regular inflection (tense, negation) followed by copula *desu* (always in nonpast affirmative form)

- (3) Performative politeness is the closest counterpart in Japanese to the 2p pronoun politeness systems in European languages (*tú/Vd.*, *tu/vous*, *du/Sie*, *thou/you*, ...)

- But note that in Japanese **all** (main-clause) predicates have to be marked, regardless of whether or not the **addressee** is a referent of the utterance!

II. Honorification/politeness involving participants in the clause

- (4) Some morphology for the two kinds of politeness marking we are about to see

(a)	o - yom-i ni nar-u	/o-/	HONORIFIC PREFIX
	o - kake ni nar-u	/yom-/	‘read’
		/kake-/	‘hang, suspend; call (phone)’
		/nar-/	‘become’
(b)	o - yom-i su-ru	/si- ~ su- ~ se-/	‘do’ (irreg.)
	o - kake su-ru		

- (c) What might we propose for the word class of *yomi* and *kake*?

Additional data: (Ivana & Sakai 2007)

sensei-ga	o-kak-i-no	hon	‘the book the teacher wrote’
<i>teacher-NOM</i>	<i>HP-write-GEN</i>	<i>book</i>	

pro moo	o-kaer-i	des-u ka?	‘did <i>pro</i> already go home?’
<i>already</i>	<i>HP-go.home</i>	<i>COP C.QUESTION</i>	

- (d) Side note: this supports the view that the /-i-/ that appears on consonant verbs with many suffixes is a morpheme that has a “zero” counterpart for vowel verbs

(5) Some lexical items

- sensei* 'teacher,' but also used for writers, politicians, etc.
- this is a title: - use as a referent, or as a form of address
 - use alone or as a suffix to a name
- watasi* 1st person sg "pronoun"
- used in male-typical and female-typical speech if formal
 - characteristic of female-typical speech if informal

(6) Under what *social* circumstances are the *o-V-ni nar-* and *o-V-si-* constructions used?

- Context: Mariko is speaking these sentences to a friend. Aya is also Mariko's friend.
 - The symbol '#' indicates 'infelicitous' — grammatical, but inappropriate to the context.
 - The usual disclaimers apply about the use of *-ga* on a main-clause subject.

- (a) (i) Aya-ga koohii-o non-da.
coffee drink-PAST
- (ii) Sensei-ga koohii-o o-nom-i-ni nat-ta.
- (iii) # Sensei-ga koohii-o o-nom-i sita.
- (b) (i) Watasi-ga Aya-o tazune-ta.
visit
- (ii) Watasi-ga sensei-o o-tazune si-ta.
- (iii) # Watasi-ga sensei-o o-tazune-ni nat-ta.
- (c) (i) Watasi-ga Aya-ni sono koto-o hanas-ita.
that matter discuss
- (ii) Watasi-ga sensei-ni sono koto-o o-hanas-i si-ta.
- (iii) # Watasi-ga sensei-ni sono koto-o o-hanas-i-ni nat-ta.
- (iv) Sensei-ga watasi.tati-ni sono koto-o o-hanas-i-ni nat-ta.
us
- (v) # Sensei-ga watasi.tati-ni sono koto-o o-hanas-i si-ta.

(7) Terminology: **SSS** ("socially superior to the speaker") (Harada 1976)

- o + V(+i) + ni naru • used when the _____ is SSS
- o + V(+i) + suru • used when the _____ is SSS

(8) What happens when both conditions are met?

- Tanaka-sensei-ga Yamada-sensei-ni sono koto-o o-hanasi-ni nat-ta.
- # Tanaka-sensei-ga Yamada-sensei-ni sono koto-o o-hanasi si-ta.

- (9) How do these *subject honorifics* (o-V-ni nar-) and *object honorifics* (o-V si) relate to *performative honorifics (formality)*?

Sensei-ga o-kaer-i-ni nat-ta. / Sensei-ga o-kaer-i-ni nar-imas-ita.

Sensei! O-kaer-i-ni nar-u? / Sensei! O-kaer-i-ni nar-imas-u ka?

Ame-ga hut-ta. / Ame-ga hur-imas-ita.
rain fall / *fall-FORMAL*

Ame-ga o-hur-i-ni natta. / #Ame-ga o-hur-i si-ta.

III. Honorifics and syntactic structure

- Under what syntactic conditions can we use subject honorifics? Object honorifics (o-V si)?

(10) Watasi-ga sensei-no o-nimotu-o o-moti si-mas-u.
HP-luggage hold (carry)

(11) Sensei-no o-nimotu-ga todoi-ta.
arrive

Sensei-no o-nimotu-ga o-todok-i-ni natta.

Background reading:

- *An early influential paper*

Harada, Shin-Ichi. 1976. Honorifics. In Masayoshi Shibatani (ed.), *Japanese Generative Grammar. Syntax & Semantics 5*. New York: Academic Press, 499-561.

- *A more recent discussion*

Ivana, Adrian, and Hiromu Sakai. 2007. Honorification and light verbs in Japanese. *Journal of East Asian Linguistics* 16(3): 171-191.

- *See also*

Jorden, Eleanor Harz, and Mari Noda. 1987. *Japanese: The Spoken Language, part I*. New Haven: Yale University Press.