Matthew Burdelski

Socializing children to honorifics in Japanese: Identity and stance in interaction

Abstract: This paper examines socialization of honorifics in Japanese. Drawing upon audiovisual recordings of interaction in households and a preschool, the paper details ways caregivers use honorifics with children and ways children use honorifics with caregivers and peers. The analysis shows ways caregivers use referent and addressee honorifics within role-play activities as an index of social roles linked to a public self, and ways they use addressee honorifics within ordinary interaction as an index of affective stance in social actions such as directives. It also shows ways children use addressee honorifics within role-plays as an index of social roles, and ways they use addressee honorifics within ordinary interaction as an index of affective stance in social actions such as objections. The findings suggest that while children learn the central meaning of addressee honorifics as a display of a public self, they also pick up on the affective meanings of honorifics in caregiver speech and deploy them in interaction with peers in creative ways.

Keywords: honorifics, affective stance, children, language socialization, Japan

1 Introduction

Honorifics are an important linguistic resource of communication in many languages. From an academic perspective, honorifics have traditionally been directly linked to politeness, especially in doing ‘face-work’ and in marking ‘negative politeness’ (see Brown & Levinson 1987). This view has been criticized by a number of scholars over the last couple of decades. For example, Ide (1989) and Matsumoto (1989) argue that prescribed social norms and features of the setting, rather than the face concerns of individuals, better account for their usage in Japanese. Recent ethnographic research in linguistics and anthropology on various languages has broadened their interpretation further; for exam-
ple, they are used in presenting a public self (Cook 1996 on Japanese), framing particular genres, events, and domains of discourse (Philips 1991, 2004 on Tongan), distributing and achieving social power and status (hierarchy) (Keating & Duranti 2006 on Pohnpeian and Samoan), and negotiating gender identities (Okamoto 2004, and this volume on Japanese). Honorifics are also used in many languages to display affect (see Besnier 1990). As Agha (1998: 153) observes, ‘[h]onorific speech is not used only for paying respect or conferring honor; it serves many other interactional agendas, such as control and domination, irony, innuendo, and masked aggression, as well as other types of socially meaningful behaviors …’ In these ways, honorifics are deployed in interaction to convey a vast range of social meanings. Thus, rather than as a fixed marker of negative politeness or deference, honorifics are better considered (and examined) as an ‘index’ (discussed below) of a wide range of socio-cultural meanings. However, while analyses of actual use reveal such a potentially wide range of meanings, honorifics are commonly conceptualized in ‘(stereo)typical’ ways by lay users (cf. Pizziconi 2011) as markers of respect or deference (‘deferen humble language’ is also a label by which honorific forms are commonly referred to by L1 speakers as well as in L2 language pedagogy), which suggests a strong link with ‘first order politeness’ (Eelen 2001), regardless of whether such usages actually reflect ‘polite’ or ‘politic’ behavior (Watts 2003).

This paper explores children’s socialization to and their use of honorifics in Japanese. Although this socialization has been a topic of previous inquiry (e.g., Nakamura 2002), this research typically equates honorifics solely with politeness (an exception is Cook 1996). The present analysis finds that honorific forms are used to signal a range of socio-cultural meanings. In particular, it shows that caregivers use honorifics – both referent honorifics (REF HON) and addressee honorifics (ADD HON) – primarily as indexes of a) identity, particularly social roles (e.g., guest, caller from a company) and (soto ‘out-group’) relationships (e.g., guest–host), and b) stance, particularly affective stance (e.g., politeness, authority, standoffishness). The analysis also shows ways children use honorifics, primarily ADD HON, as an index of identity and stance in both prescribed and creative ways. The analysis presented here suggests that socialization to honorific usage exposes children from the outset to a wide range of the social meanings described above, and illustrates how children reproduce these meanings in their quotidian interactions with caregivers and peers.

In the remainder of this paper, section 2 summarizes previous literature on honorifics and their social meanings, and the theoretical framework of language socialization. Sections 3 and 4 present an analysis of caregiver and children’s use of honorifics in and around urban households and a preschool in Japan,
as evidenced by a large corpus (over 200 hours) of audiovisual data. Section 5 summarizes the findings and relates the analyses to the multiple meanings of honorifics in Japanese.

2 Background

2.1 Japanese honorifics

In Japanese, honorifics (keigo) are an important linguistic resource of interaction, and thus many caregivers socialize children to them from an early age in both role-play activities and real world situations (e.g., Clancy 1986; Nakamura 2002). Similar to some other languages such as Korean, Javanese, and Vietnamese, Japanese has a rich system of honorifics, which consists of a range of lexical and grammaticalized forms. One category of honorifics is ‘referent honorifics’ (REF HON) (sozai keigo), which includes i) ‘respectful language’ (sonkeigo), ii) ‘humble/deferential language’ (kenjoogo), and iii) ‘beautification language’ (bikago) (see Pizziconi 2011, for more information). A second category of honorifics is ‘addressee honorifics’ (ADD HON) (taisha keigo), which are frequently referred to as the -desu/-masu form (Maynard 1991), and are typically considered (by Japanese lay speakers) as a ‘polite’ (teinei) form (Pizziconi 2007). Yet, the ways that speakers use honorifics, especially ADD HON, is not always linked to politeness, as we will see.

A number of researchers (e.g., Cook 2006, this volume; Dunn 2005; Okamoto 1998, 1999) have examined Japanese speakers’ use of honorifics in interaction, and have challenged the notion that they use them in relation to Brown & Levinson’s (1987: 279) ‘negative politeness’ (e.g., showing deference to an addressee when committing a face-threatening act such as a request). In terms of REF HON, for instance, Cook (this volume) found that a host and guest on a television shopping channel used referent honorifics in order to present the guest in relation to multiple social roles, namely those of a scientist (expert) and a salesman. Also, Dunn (2005) observed that during wedding ceremonial speeches even higher social status persons used deferential language in referring to the bride and groom in order to construct their own social role as wedding speakers who address an audience on-stage.

In terms of ADD HON, several researchers have shown that Japanese speakers do not consistently use honorifics within the same communicative situation

---

1 More information on data and methodology can be found in Burdelski (2010, 2011).
but ‘style shift’ (e.g., Cook 2006; Dunn 1999; Geyer, this volume; Jones & Ono 2008) between ADD HON and plain forms. For instance, Cook (2006) found that teachers and students in office hours shift between ADD HON and plain forms in order to negotiate relationships and index various degrees of distance and intimacy with the interlocutor depending on the topic of conversation. Also, similar to other intimate relationships, while Japanese caregiver–child interaction is typically carried out using plain forms, such style-shifting also occurs there. For example, Clancy (1985: 444) found that Japanese mothers use ADD HON in addressing children in order to ‘briefly adopt a different attitude’ such as ‘formality,’ or in order to take on a different ‘role towards their child’ such as a ‘teacher.’ Similarly, Cook (1996, 1997) showed that Japanese parents use ADD HON when addressing children at specific junctions, such as when taking responsibility for an action or activity, quoting third party speech, and using formulaic expressions. She concludes that parents use ADD HON with children to index a ‘public self.’

Although studies on Japanese interaction have shed light on the use of honorifics in constructing a range of socio-cultural meanings, we still have a limited understanding of their socialization, including children’s use of honorifics with peers (but see Fukuda 2005; Nakamura 1996, which will be discussed further in section 4.1).

2.2 Language socialization, stance, and identity

Socialization to honorifics is conceptualized here as a process of language socialization (e.g., Schieffelin & Ochs 1986) – a theory of the integration of language learning and cultural learning that explores children’s (and other novices’) acquisition of particular subjectivities (Kulick & Schieffelin 2004) in interaction with adults (and other experts) and peers (Goodwin & Kyratzis 2007). More specifically, language socialization investigates ‘socialization through the use of language’ and socialization to use language’ (italics in original) (Schieffelin & Ochs 1986: 163). In particular, socialization ‘through the use of language’ entails learning to use language as an index (Agha 1993; Silverstein 1976), what Silverstein (1976) refers to as a nonreferential index, of socio-cultural meanings. Among these realities are identity and stance (Ochs 1990, 2002), which will be examined here.

First, identity, which encompasses all aspects of social personae (Ochs 1996), is examined here in terms of social roles and relationships, especially ways of ‘relating’ to others (Arundale 2006, 2011). Roles and relationships, which are integrated notions, may be ‘explicitly invoked’ (Pomerantz & Mandel-
baum 2005) through the use of person reference terms, including those marking kinship (e.g., mother–child, older sibling–younger sibling) or particular settings (e.g., guest–host). In explicitly invoking a social role (e.g., guest), a speaker may implicitly invoke a relationship between two or more parties (e.g., guest–host). As in many societies, in Japan roles and relationships are often viewed along two axes: (i) vertical axis, including hierarchy (e.g., status, rank), and (ii) horizontal axis, including ‘in-group’ (uchi) and ‘out-group’ (soto) (e.g., Bachnik & Quinn 1994; Nakane 1970). Language, particularly honorifics, is a central resource for indexing social roles and (soto) relationships, which Cook (1996) suggests is done by Japanese caregivers in using ADD HON with children. The present analysis shows that caregivers use honorifics in combination with other linguistic resources such as honorific person reference terms (e.g. kochira ‘I/this person’ [lit. ‘this side’] REF HON-Deferential, okyakusan ‘guest’ REF HON-Respectful) to socialize children to the use of honorifics in enacting social roles and relationships.

Second, stance refers to displayed attitudes towards others (e.g., Jaffe 2009), and it involves ‘positioning subjects (self and others), and aligning with other subjects’ (Du Bois 2007: 163). Here, stance is examined in terms of affective stance, which includes ‘mood, attitude, feeling and disposition, as well as degrees of emotional intensity vis-à-vis some focus of concern’ (Ochs 1996: 410). It is indexed through various ‘affect specifiers,’ such as voice quality, lexicon, and pragmatic particles that depict emotional position, and ‘affect intensifiers,’ such as emphatic stress and repetition that depict degree of emotional strength, and thus is an important dimension in relating to others. Different theoretical frameworks have their own conceptualizations of politeness (see Eelen 2001). In language socialization theory, politeness is generally considered a type of affective stance (whereas in Watts’ model, for instance, the type of politeness considered here is not called politeness but rather ‘politic behavior’). Thus, language socialization researchers may refer to ‘polite’ affective stances such as those of deference, respect, and formality. Moreover, language socialization views such stances as indexed through a variety of linguistic resources. Yet, there is no one-to-one mapping between any (non-)linguistic form and politeness. As a case in point, while honorifics in Japanese are often considered a resource for indexing polite affective stances, they have also been shown to index a range of other types of stances. For instance, Hasegawa (2006: 213) points out that adult speakers may use ADD HON to sound ‘unfriendly, standoffish, or rejecting.’ As the following analysis shows, adult caregivers use ADD HON to index a wide range of affective stances, and children acquire the use of ADD HON to index a range of such stances in their own speech when interacting with peers.
3 Caregiver use of honorifics and strategies

3.1 Indexing social roles, relationships, and politeness

This section examines Japanese caregiver use of ADD HON and REF HON in role-play and ADD HON in non role-play interaction with children as an index of social roles, relationships, and politeness.

3.1.1 Role-play

A primary activity through which Japanese caregivers socialize children to social meanings of honorifics is role-play, a hypothetical situation entailing role ‘voicing’ (in Bakhtin’s sense). In particular, in role-play caregivers often use ADD HON as an index of public social roles, out-group relationships, and formality, and on occasion they use ADD HON together with REF HON in indexing respect and deference. Moreover, caregivers use three central strategies in this form of socialization: a) addressing children, b) prompting them what to say, and c) speaking for children. An illustration of a) is in (1), which also sheds light on children’s early use of ADD HON and REF HON in role-play. In this telephone role-play (using a toy telephone), a mother is a ‘caller’ and the child (Taka, male, 2;5 [= 2 years and 5 months]) is ‘himself.’ After exchanging greetings (Moshimoshi ‘Hello’) and then asking the child if he is Yamaguchi Takahiro-kun (using his full name [last name first and adding the diminutive suffix -kun for boys to his first name]), the following interaction ensues (ADD HON are shown in bold, and REF HON are underlined. Transcription conventions and interlinear gloss abbreviations appear in the appendix):

(1) Family home (Kyoto): telephone role-play in living room (3/10/2005, 1:10 pm)

1. Mother: Anno, kochina kaisha na n desu
   Um this.RHON company COP.ATT NMLZ.reason COP.AHON keredomo:, but
   ‘Um, I am from the company, but ...’

2. o-too-san ka o-kaa-san wa irasshai-masu ka:?:?
   RHON-father-RHON Q RHON-mother-RHON TOP be.RHON-AHON Q
   ‘Is your father or mother in?’

3. (1.0)

2 All names are pseudonyms.
4. Takahiro: *irasshai-masu yo.*
   be.RHON-AHON PP
   ‘They are in.’

5. (0.3)

6. Mother: *N ja chotto e-too-san ka e-kaa-san ni*  
   Well then bit RHON-father-RHON Q RHON-mother-RHON DAT  
   kawa-tte mora-e-masu ka::?
   change-TE receive-POT-AHON Q
   ‘Well then, can I have you put your father or mother on?’

7. Takahiro: *N::.*  
   mm
   ‘Mm.’

8. (4.1)

   good COP.AHON  
   ‘It’s good.’

10. Mother: *Hai.*  
    yes
    ‘Yes.’

    huh good COP.AHON  
    ‘Huh? It’s good.’ (slight laughter)

12. (0.3)

13. Mother: *hh iya chotto kawa-tte hoshii n desu [keredomo.*  
    no bit change-TE want SE COP.AHON but  
    ‘(laugh) No, I want you to put them on a bit but.’

14. Father:  

15. Mother: *O-too-san ni kawa-tte mora-tte mo lii desu*  
   RHON-father-RHON DAT change-TE receive-TE even good COP-AHON  
   ka::?
   Q
   ‘Is it good to have you put your father on?’

16. (2.6)

17. Takahiro: *li n da tte.*  
   good SE COP QUOT  
   ‘He (= father) said it’s good.

18. (0.3)

19. Mother: *li n da t(h)te.*  
   good SE COP QUOT  
   ‘He (= father) said it is good.’ (slight laughter)

20. *Iya lii n da tte janaku-te,*  
    no good SE COP QUOT NEG-TE  
    ‘No, it’s not “he said it’s good,”’
In the beginning of this role-play the mother identifies herself in a fictive role using the person reference term *kochira* (‘I’ REF HON-Deferential) in combination with the word *kaisha* (‘company’) (line 1), which implies ‘I am (a person) from the company.’ Following this, she asks the child whether his father or mother are at home (line 2), using ADD HON and REF HON. In this utterance she uses the person reference terms *o-too-san* (‘father’, REF HON-Respectful) and *o-kaa-san* (‘mother’, REF HON-Respectful) in combination with the verbal expression *irasshai-masu* (‘to be [at home]’, REF HON + ADD HON) to index an out-group relationship with the child (and the parents) and to index respect towards the child’s parents. The mother continues to use ADD HON (lines 1, 2, 6, 11, 13, 15, 21, 24, and 26) throughout the role-play, except for a brief style shift to the plain form (line 19) that marks an exit out of the role-play frame to deal with a problem in the child’s understanding (which is also marked by slight laughter). In these ways, the mother uses ADD HON and REF HON together with other linguistic resources such as person reference terms as an index of social roles and relationships located outside the household, which concurs with Cook’s (1996) claim of the use of honorifics, especially ADD HON, as an index of a ‘public self.’

In response to his mother (the caller), the child uses ADD HON and (briefly) REF HON. While the child’s use of ADD HON throughout the role-play reveals that even two-year-old children are able to use ADD HON to index particular social roles and relationships linked to a public self, his use of REF HON in line 4 reveals early problems in understanding of the social meanings of REF HON. Two issues related to the child’s response in line 4 will be discussed here. First,
while repetition is an important resource in children’s language acquisition (e.g., Keenan, 1977), such repetition of REF HON in Japanese can index an erroneous social meaning. In particular following the mother’s initial question (line 2: お-too-san ka お-kaa-san wa irasshai-masu ka:::?: ‘Is your father or mother in?’), in which the verbal expression irasshai-masu (REF HON-Respectful + ADD HON) indexes out-group relationships, the child repeats this expression (line 4: irasshai-masu yo ‘They are’) and thus indexes his parents as out-group members. When referring to in-group members, speakers are instead expected to use a different verbal expression, either ori-masu (REF HON-Differential + ADD HON) or i-masu (ADD HON) (both Standard variety), as the child correctly does in line 25, which indexes the relationship to his parents as in-group.

Second, while ‘indirect speech acts’ (Searle 1991) are an important feature of interaction everywhere, learning how to respond to them may sometimes be vexing for children. In particular, here while the mother’s initial question (line 2: ‘Is your father or mother in?’) is a ‘locutionary act’ regarding the existence of the father and mother at home; more importantly, it is an ‘illocutionary act’ that functions as a request to the child to hand over the phone to one of them. In his response (line 4: irasshai-masu yo ‘They are’), the child keeps the phone receiver to his ear, which suggests he understands the locutionary act, but not the illocutionary one. This failure to respond to the illocutionary act is not only a problem related to REF HON. Indeed, even when the mother continues to use ADD HON without REF HON, the child fails to respond to her utterances as illocutionary acts, and these responses drive the remainder of this role-play, as the mother recasts her requests a number of times (in a general pattern from indirect to less indirect/more direct but nevertheless still ‘polite’ with the use of kudasai ‘please’ in lines 21 and 26) until the child eventually hands over the phone to his father (line 27). This example suggests that role-play is a crucial activity through which caregivers convey to children the use of honorifics as indices of particular social roles (public selves), out-group relationships, and ‘polite’ affective stances, and one in which children try out honorific forms in their speech as indices of such social meanings.

In addition to addressing children, in role-plays caregivers also convey to children the social meanings of honorifics by prompting them what to say to third parties and speaking for them. For instance, in (2) from the preschool, a teacher’s prompting and speaking for a child (Mao, female, 2;8) is sparked when the child enters the make-believe ‘home’ of two female peers (Hina, 3;3 and Kana, 3;4), and then takes a spoon off their table, which draws a protest from one of them (Kana), who adamantly says to Mao, ‘You’re in the way’
This leads to the following interaction beginning with the teacher who has come over to intervene:

(2) Preschool classroom: peer house role-play, ‘polite’ guest (8/29/2007, 9:51 am)

1. Teacher: *Ja o-jama shi-masu tte iwa-na-kyya.* (to Mao)   
   well RHON-disturb do-AHON QUOT say-NEG-MOD
   ‘Well, you have to say (to Hina and Kana), “I will disturb you”.’

2. o-kyaku-san na n da kara.  
   RHON-guest RHON COP.ATT NMLZ COP since
   ‘Since you’re a guest.’

3. Teacher: *O-jama shi-masu tte.* (while holding Mao’s arm)   
   RHON-disturb do-AHON QUOT
   ‘Say, “I will disturb you”’

4. Mao: (*)   

5. Teacher: *Ne: o-jama shi-masu tte.*   
   PP RHON-disturb do-AHON QUOT
   ‘Right, say “I will disturb you”’

((turns skipped as another child enters the scene and sits down))

6. Mao: (*)   

7. Teacher: *Ne: o-jama shi-masu tte.*   
   PP RHON-disturb do-AHON QUOT
   ‘Right, say “I will disturb you”’

8. Kana: (*)   

9. Hina: *A::: da:::[me:]:(points toward cup in Mao’s hand)   
   ah no.good
   ‘Ah, no good.’

10. Teacher: *[Hai ]* (pulls out chair for another child to sit on)   
     ‘Here you are.’

11. Kana: *KANA GA SUPUUN DE TABEN [NO:::::::]*   
     first.name NOM spoon INS eat NMLZ
     ‘Kana (= I) will eat with a spoon!’

12. Teacher: *[A::: Ja: ]*   
     ah well
     ‘Ah, well’

13. [Kore o-kari shi-masu toka iwa-nai to dame janai]   
    this RHON-borrow do-AHON such.as say-NEG COND no. good NEG no, Mao-chan.
    PP Mao-DIM
    ‘It’s no good if you do not say, “I will borrow this,” Mao-chan.’

---

3 The literal meaning of *jama* is ‘disturbance,’ and it is also used in the deferential expression *O-jama shi-masu*, which the teacher instructs Mao to say as a request (announcement) in lines 1, 3, and 5 of this excerpt.

4 The Japanese diminutive markers -*chan* (typically for girls and very young boys) and -*kun* (typically for boys) are retained in the English gloss.
21. 

22. **dama-tte tot-tara.**
   silent-TE take-COND
   ‘If you take it while being silent (it’s no good).’

23. 

24. ${(gives spoon back to Kana)}

25. 

26. **O-kyaku-san na n da tte.**
   RHON-guest-RHON COP-ATT NMLZ COP QUOT
   ‘They say these things belong to the people in this house.’

27. 

28. 

29. 

Upon coming over to the play area, the teacher ‘prompts’ (e.g., Demuth 1986) Mao to say two formulaic expressions to the girls. Although these prompts utilize plain forms (line 1: truncated modal marker -kya which functions as an obligation ‘have to/must’, and lines 3 and 5: quotative particle tte), the embedded formulaic expressions utilize honorifics as an index of social meaning within the role-play frame. In particular, the first expression (lines 1, 3, 5: **O-jama shi-masu** ‘I will disturb you’, REF HON-Deferential + ADD HON) encourages Mao to display deference towards the girls and their space. Following this initial prompt, the teacher provides a reason to Mao as to why she has to say this expression (line 2: **O-kyaku-san nan da kara** ‘Since you are a guest’). In this reason, the teacher uses the person reference term **o-kyaku-san** (‘guest’ REF HON-Respectful), which links the formulaic expression to a particular social role. In this way, while the teacher positions Mao in a particular social role,

---

5 This prompt is an ‘elicited imitation’ (Hood & Schieffelin 1978) in which an expression is provided (to a child) followed by a directive to repeat it, and is the most frequent type of prompt used by Japanese caregivers (see Burdelski 2009, for more information).
she conveys that this role requires a display of deference towards the girls and their space. When Mao does not repeat this expression, the teacher prompts her again to say it (lines 3 and 5), which suggests that she places a great deal of importance on Mao uttering this expression. In response to Mao continuing not to say the expression, the teacher prompts her to say a second expression related to the spoon that Mao had taken off the girls’ table (line 20: Kore g-kari shi-masu ‘I will borrow this’ REF HON-Deferential + ADD HON). In this way, the teacher shifts the locus of deference from the (girls and their) space to (the girls and) a particular object in the scene. When Mao does not repeat this expression either, instead of prompting her again, the teacher deploys a different strategy, namely addressing the girls for the first time in this sequence by ‘speaking for’ (daiben) (Okamoto 2001) Mao in making two requests to the girls for a spoon.

In uttering these requests, the teacher formulates them as questions (line 25: O-kyaku-san na n desu kedo, supuun ka nan ka ari-masen ka::, Kana-chan ‘She [= Mao] is a guest, but wouldn’t you have a spoon or something, Kana-chan?’ REF HON + ADD HON; line 27: Ja chotto attara kashite kudasai-masen ka ‘Well if you have [a spoon], wouldn’t you let her borrow it a bit?’ ADD HON). In the first request, she uses the person reference term o-kyaku-san (‘guest’) REF HON-Respectful) to encourage the girls to display respect towards Mao. In responding to the first request, Kana nods her head (line 26), which (similar to example [1] above) suggests that she attends to the utterance as a locutionary act (a question on the existence of a spoon) rather than as an illocutionary one (a request to get Mao a spoon). When the teacher re-issues the request by directly asking Kana whether she can lend Mao a spoon (line 27), Hina (rather than Kana) obliges by going to the cupboard and taking out a spoon for Mao (line 29), which displays a shift in stance from one of exclusion to one of inclusion of Mao in the role-play.

Although none of the children produce honorifics here, this excerpt suggests that caregivers may use a combination of strategies including addressing children, prompting them what to say, and speaking for them to provide a model to children on the use of honorifics as an index of social roles, relationships, and polite affective stance.

---

6 See also Cook (this volume) on a host’s use of o-kyaku-sama (honorable guest) (-sama is more respectful than -san) in referring to the non co-present viewers of a shopping channel on television.
3.1.2 Non role-play

Japanese caregivers also socialize children to honorifics, especially ADD HON, as an index of identity and stance within non role-play (i.e., real world) interaction, especially in situations when children are i) ‘on-stage’ in front of an audience (of children and teachers), ii) interacting with unfamiliar adults (e.g., a neighbor, visitor) or those stationed in public social roles (e.g., shopkeeper, researcher, librarian), or iii) expected to produce ritualized expressions in ostensibly formal settings (e.g., making wishes at a Shinto shrine). In such situations, caregivers socialize children to the use of ADD HON in enacting a public self and displaying a polite affective stance. An example of interacting with an unfamiliar adult (ii above) is in (3). Here, a mother and child (Masaru, male, 1;10) have approached the neighbor’s house where a female playmate (‘girl’ in this excerpt) and her grandmother (who is unknown to them) are on the front porch. While there is a good deal of style-shifting between plain form and ADD HON by both the grandmother and Masaru’s mother, the focus of the analysis is primarily on the mother’s use of ADD HON in speaking for Masaru to the grandmother. Prior to the excerpt, the grandmother crouched down to Masaru’s eye level and greeted him (*konni*chiwa ‘Good afternoon’), and in response Masaru’s mother prompted him to repeat the same greeting, although Masaru did not say it. The grandmother then asked Masaru his age (*O-ikutsu desu* ka ‘How old are you?’), to which his mother prompted him several times what to say to her (*Issai ya na* ‘You’re one, right?’; *Issai dekiru yaro* ‘You can do “I’m one”, right?’; *Issai shite agete* ‘Do, “I’m one”’), although to no avail. Following this, the grandmother poses a confirmation question to Masaru regarding his (nick)name as shown in line 1:

(3) Family next-door neighbor (Kyoto): self-introduction (8/22/2004, 12:05 pm)

1. Grandma: *Masa-kun tte you n o?* (at Masaru’s eye level) 
   first.name-DIM QUOT say Q
   You’re called Masa-kun?”

2. Mother: {quote}Hai.\%
   yes
   ‘Yes.’

3. (0.2)

---

7 Even though she is meeting him for the first time, the grandmother knows Masaru’s name, using it in this confirmation question, because she had overheard his mother call out to him a moment ago as they were approaching the house.
4. Mother: Masaru desu. (presses hand on Masaru’s head)
   first.name COP:AHON
   ‘I am/He is Masaru.’
5. (.)
6. Girl: Masaru ().
   Masaru
   ‘Masaru ( ).’
7. Mother: [Tanaka Masaru desu.]
   Tanaka Masaru COP:AHON
   I am/he is Tanaka Masaru.’

In response to the grandmother’s question (line 1: Masa-kun tte yuu no? ‘You’re called Masa-kun?’), Masaru’s mother, seemingly anticipating Masaru will have difficulty with the response, speaks for him (line 4: Masaru desu ‘I am/he is Masaru’). Similar to other research (Hendry 1986), here while speaking for Masaru his mother presses her hand on his head to encourage him to bow towards the grandmother. In this way, she not only provides Masaru with a model on the use of language and embodiment, but also encourages him to take the position of an active performer of the self-introduction. Following this, the mother repeats the self-introduction (line 7: Tanaka Masaru desu ‘I am/he is Tanaka Masaru’), this time adding the family’s last name (Tanaka), which is a more formal self-introduction, and one expected of children once they enter school. In these ways, caregivers use ADD HON in non role-play interaction in modeling for children how to enact a public self and display a polite affective stance that is applicable to a range of situations. Of course in using ADD HON in speaking for children, caregivers enact not only children’s public selves but also (simultaneously) their own.

3.2 Indexing heightened affective stance and authority in directives

In addition to using honorifics as an index of a polite affective stance, caregivers use honorifics, especially ADD HON, as an index of a wide range of other affective stances. In particular, on occasion they use ADD HON in issuing ‘directives’ (e.g., Ervin-Tripp 1976) to children, particularly so-called ‘instruction directives’ (Clancy 1986: 224). Such directives often take the form of a ‘declarative command’ (Falsgraf & Majors 1995: 10) either positive (e.g., Tabe-masu ‘You will eat’) or negative (e.g. Iki-masen ‘You will not go’). For instance, in (4) from the preschool, when a male child (an L2 speaker of Japanese) threw a toy towards another child in playing rough with another child a teacher responded as follows:
Similarly to prior research (Cook 1997), here the teacher style shifts to ADD HON within a single sequential context. In particular, after issuing a directive to the child using a plain form (line 1: *Nage-nai* ‘You do not throw’) and the ‘child does not comply with her order’ (Cook 1997: 703) (see line 2), the mother repeats the directive use of ADD HON (line 3: *Nage-masen* ‘You do not throw’). This style shift can be related in general to emotional distancing, and in particular to Brown & Levinson’s (1987: 110–111) account of a caregiver ‘withdrawing emotional support’ by switching to ‘a code associated with external relations’ (e.g., using the child’s first name instead of a nickname). Also, in concert with the notions that directives are a display of authority (in causing another to act) (Goodwin 1990) and that repetition is an ‘affect intensifier’ (Ochs & Schieffelin 1989: 14), here the teacher’s repetition of the directive use of ADD HON intensifies the display of authority in encouraging the child to comply. This view concurs with Clancy’s (1985: 445) observation that Japanese caregivers use ADD HON to adopt an ‘authoritative stance in correcting a child who is misbehaving.’

In general, while preschool teachers often do not intervene in children’s rough play, preferring to let them work out conflicts on their own (Tobin, Hsueh & Karasawa 2009), this excerpt suggests that caregivers may use ADD HON in intervening in situations of rough play particularly when children in the environment might become injured (by a flying toy).

Yet, teachers also use ADD HON in directives in situations other than when injury may be relevant. For instance, in (5), a teacher’s use of ADD HON is sparked when a child reaches out to touch the wireless microphone on the teacher’s lapel:

(5) Preschool nearby playground: Child (male, 5;5) (10/17/2007, 11:01 am)
1. Teacher: *Tor-e-masen* ((while taking hold of child’s arm))
   take-POT-AHON.NEG
   ‘You cannot take it.’
2. Teacher: ((holding child’s arm)) (0.9)
3. Teacher: *Daaijina kikai desu.*
   important instrument COP:AHON
   ‘It is an important instrument.’
4. Teacher:  
Koware-masu.
break-AHON
'It will break.'

Here, the teacher issues a directive to the child to not touch the microphone (line 1: Tor-e-masen 'You cannot take it'), and then provides an implicit reason for this directive (line 2: Daijina kikai desu 'It's an important instrument'), and finally relates the negative consequences of the child’s action to the object in question (line 4: Koware-masu 'It will break'). Similar to example (4), the teacher uses ADD HON within a directive to index heightened affective stance and authority in order to prevent the child from touching and possibly breaking an object that does not belong to the preschool. Similar to the observation that affective stance is a ‘multichannel phenomenon’ (Besnier 1990: 421), here the teacher also uses embodied resources to index this stance, in particular grabbing the child’s arm to move it out of reach of the microphone (lines 1 and 2), which ensures his understanding and compliance with the directive. In summary, in addition to polite affective stance as shown earlier, the previous two excerpts reveal that Japanese caregivers also use ADD HON to index heightened affective stance and authority within directives.

4 Children’s use of honorifics with peers in preschool

What are some of the outcomes of the processes of socialization to honorifics examined above? This section addresses this question by examining children’s use of honorifics, especially ADD HON, in interaction with peers in the preschool. While honorifics as indexes of identity were observed in role-play and non role-play situations in both household and preschool, ADD HON as indices of heightened affective stance were observed only in non-role play interactions in the preschool.

4.1 Role-play: Enacting public social roles and relationships

Similarly to children in other communities (e.g., Andersen 1984; Sawyer 1996 on children in the United States; Paugh 2005, on children in Dominica), children in Japan frequently engage in role-plays with peers. In such role-plays, they often use ADD HON (Fukuda 2005; Nakamura 1996) in enacting (public) social roles and relationships, such as doctor–patient, host–guest, and clerk–customer. For
instance, in (6) from the preschool, a male (Kazuki, 5;7) and female child (Sakura, 2;11) are playing a customer (Kazuki) and clerk (Sakura) at a refreshment stand:

(6) Preschool classroom: store role-play (12/19/2008, 4:34 pm)
1. Kazuki: Aisukuriimu wa ari-masu ka?
   ice.cream TOP have-AHON Q
   ‘Do you have ice cream?’
2. (0.6)
   ah have-AHON
   ‘Ah I/we have.’
4. (0.5)
5. Kazuki: Ja aisukuriimu kudasai.
   well ice.cream please-AHON
   ‘Well then, ice cream please.’
   bit now RHON-money give-AHON so
   ‘I’ll give you some money now so (wait a bit).’

In this excerpt, the children use ADD HON in enacting their public social roles of customer and clerk. This use is consistent with the process of socialization observed earlier in household and preschool, and is the most frequent situation in which the children used ADD HON.

4.2 Non-role-play: Style shift, social actions, and affective stance

Children also on occasion use ADD HON in non role-play interaction with peers, especially in making objections and in performing related social actions (e.g., giving a reason for a refusal of a request). In such interactions, children style shift from plain form to ADD HON in combination with other language resources (e.g., increased volume, vowel elongation) as an index of heightened affective stance. For instance, in (7), two girls (Girl-1, 3;0 and Girl-2, 2;11) are seated at a table, each working on her own jigsaw puzzle. When Girl-2 finishes her puzzle, she tries to intervene in Girl-1’s puzzle activity by reaching over and picking up a piece of the puzzle that Girl-1 is working on. Girl-1 responds to her as follows:
In response to Girl-2’s intervention, Girl-1 objects (line 1: *Moo hitori de dekirusu kara daijobu* ‘I can do it by myself, so I’m fine [without help]’), using a plain form. When Girl-2 does not produce the next expected action (i.e., does not set down the puzzle piece and withdraw her hand), Girl-1 objects again by using a partial repetition of her previous utterance (line 4: *HITORI DE DEKIRU:* ‘I can do it by myself’), which again employs a plain form, and this time also a loud voice and vowel elongation. As Girl-2 continues to keep her hand on the puzzle pieces, Girl-1 repeats this objection three times (lines 5, 7, and 9). In the second of these repetitions, she style shifts to ADD HON (line 7: *HITORI DE DEKIRU-MASU:* ‘I can do it by myself’), using a loud voice and vowel elongation as in her immediately previous utterances in this sequence. In this way, Girl-1 uses ADD HON together with other prosodic resources as an index of heightened affective stance in performing a particular social action. Similar to caregiver use (see example [4]), here Girl-1 style shifts to ADD HON in response to Girl-2 not carrying out an expected next action made relevant by a prior utterance using a plain form. Interestingly, Girl-1’s use of prosodic resources (e.g., increased volume, vowel elongation) exhibits greater affective intensity than is typical of caregivers in style shifting to ADD HON as discussed above.

Finally, children also use ADD HON together with non-verbal resources and other verbal resources as an index of heightened affective stance in performing
particular social actions such as objections or giving reasons for refusals. For instance, in (8), when two girls (Hina, 2;11 and Kana, 3;0) are riding in a row boat in the classroom, an older boy (Kazuki, 4;11) comes up to them and makes a request to ride using a plain form as follows:

1. Kazuki: No-se-te
   ride-CAUS-TE
   ‘Let me ride.’
2. Hina: Dame.
   no.good
   ‘No.’
3. (0.3)
4. Hina: Kocchi mo ai-te-masen. ((nods head once))
   this.way either open-TE-AHON.NEG
   ‘This seat isn’t open.’
5. Kazuki: ((puts one knee on side of boat))
6. Kana: Kocchi mo ai-te-masen. ((nods head three times))
   this.way either open-TE-AHON.NEG
   ‘This seat isn’t open either.’
7. Hina: [
8. Kazuki: [[(climbs into boat)]]
9. Hina: NORE-MA::SE:::E:::N. ((leans forward toward Kazuki))
   ride-POT-AHON.NEG
   ‘You can’t ride.’
10. Kana: >NOR-E-MA::SE:::E:::N. ((leans forward toward Kazuki))
    ride-POT-AHON.NEG
    ‘You can’t ride.’
11. Hina: [O:MO:::i DE::::::SU. ((leans forward))
    heavy COP.AHON
    ‘You’re heavy.’
12. Kazuki: ((smiling somewhat)) (0.3)
13. Kana: O:MO:::i DE::::::SU.
    heavy COP.AHON
    ‘You’re heavy.’
14. (0.7)
15. Hina: Jaa moo Hina-chan [wa iki-masu. ((getting out of boat))
    well already name-DIM TOP go-AHON
    ‘Well, Hina-chan (= I) will go.’
16. Kana: [((following behind Hina))
17. Kazuki: ((sits in Hina’s prior seat, alone in boat))

In response to Kazuki’s request, Hina refuses (line 2: Dame ‘No’), using a plain form. Following a brief pause (line 3), Hina provides a reason for this refusal (line 4: Kocchi mo ai-te-masen ‘This seat isn’t open’), style-shifting to ADD HON.
When Kazuki ignores her by climbing into the boat anyway, Hina objects (line 9: *NOR-E::MA::SE::::::E:::N* ‘You cannot ride’) and then provides Kazuki with another reason he cannot ride in the boat (line 11: *O:MO:::I DE::::::SU* ‘You’re heavy’), again using ADD HON together with a loud voice and phonological lengthening. As mentioned earlier, as affect is a ‘multichannel phenomenon’ (Besnier 1990: 421), here Hina also uses embodied means by leaning her head and torso forward towards Kazuki (figure 1) as an index of heightened affective stance. Kana, who is riding in the boat with Hina, aligns with this stance by repeating both of Hina’s utterances (lines 6, 10, and 13) and her embodied actions (lines 6 and 10). At the end of this sequence, Hina announces that she will get out of the boat (line 15: *Jaa, Hina-chan wa iki-masu* ‘Well, Hina-chan [= I will go’), again using ADD HON, and when Kana follows behind her without saying anything (line 16) this ends their interaction with Kazuki, who is left for the time being to play in the boat on his own.

In summary, preschool children on occasion use ADD HON together with other verbal and non-verbal resources in interaction with peers in making objections and in performing related social actions as an index of heightened affective stance.
5 Summary and conclusion

This paper has examined children’s socialization to honorifics in the household and preschool in Japan. The analysis reveals that caregivers use honorific forms as an index of a range of socio-culturally meaningful realities, especially identity and stance. In particular, as the first part of the analysis shows, they model to children the use of ADD HON in enacting (public) social roles and relationships in role-play (examples [1] and [2]) and in presenting a child’s public self in non role-play (i.e., real world) interaction with other adults (example [3]). They also model the use of REF HON in displaying deference and respect toward third parties in role-play (examples [1] and [2]). In these ways, caregivers convey to children the use of honorifics in relation to ‘politeness,’ in particular displaying affective stances of formality (ADD HON) and deference and respect (REF HON) to third parties. We have seen that caregivers use three strategies in this socialization: a) addressing children, b) prompting them what to say, and c) speaking for them. Caregivers may use two or more of these strategies together in response to children’s actions (e.g., such as not producing the prompted expression as in example [2]). For their part, preschool children often use ADD HON in role-plays in enacting (public) social roles and relationships (example [6]), though they tend to use REF HON in role-plays in more limited ways (e.g., repetition of a prior caregiver turn) (example [1]). Similar to other research on Japanese socialization (e.g., Clancy 1985), these observations suggest that children acquire ADD HON as indexes of identity and polite affective stance fairly early – around the age of two to two and a half – but do not acquire REF HON until (much) later (Clancy 1985), at least after entering formal schooling.

The analysis also shows that caregivers socialize children to honorifics as an index of a range of affective stances beyond politeness. In particular, caregivers on occasion also use ADD HON in addressing children in directives to display heightened affective stance and authority (examples [4] and [5]). In this way, caregivers use ADD HON as a ‘high affect form’ (Schieffelin & Ochs 1986: 180), which may make it easily noticed and acquired by children. Indeed, children seem to pick up on this use of ADD HON by deploying it with prosodic and embodied resources in indexing affective stance in creative ways, such as in making objections to peers’ actions and performing other related social actions (examples [7] and [8]). In line with the growing body of research on Japanese honorifics in interaction (e.g., Cook, this volume; Geyer, this volume), these findings suggest that preschool children in Japan are learning to use honorifics, especially ADD HON, as an index of various socio-cultural meanings. In summary, children are learning to use honorifics in ways of ‘relating’ (Arundale 2011) to others in the social world; in the case of ADD HON this includes being
polite, as well as being ‘unfriendly, standoffish, or rejecting’ (Hasegawa 2006: 213).

Finally, while language socialization is a lifelong process everywhere (Schieffelin & Ochs 1986), this may be particularly true in relation to honorifics, which are learned and re-learned by speakers of Japanese through everyday interaction and other more formal means (e.g., classroom business manners courses, Dunn, this volume). Yet, the early socialization of honorifics examined here lays the groundwork for this long term learning process, which involves not only acquiring the ability to use honorifics but also learning the strategies for socializing others to them, contributing to the reproduction and transformation of the indexical meanings of honorific forms across the lifespan.

Bionote

Matthew Burdelski is Associate Professor in Japanese Linguistics at Osaka University. His research interests are in language socialization, pragmatic development, and first/second/heritage language learning. His recent publications include ‘“I’m sorry flower”: Socializing apology, empathy, and relationships in Japan’ (in Pragmatics and Society, 2013) and ‘Language socialization and politeness routines’ (in The handbook of language socialization, Wiley-Blackwell, 2011).

Appendix

Transcription conventions

[Wo]rd  Brackets around word or partial word indicate overlapping talk.
Wo:rd  Colon marks phonological lengthening (each colon is approx. 0.1 sec.).
WORD  Capital letters indicate increased volume.
°word°  Circles around a word or phrase indicate decreased volume.
No-se-te  Hyphen in between indicates a morpheme boundary.
(bows)  Non-verbal actions and comments are shown in double parenthesis.
.h  Period followed by the letter h indicates an in-breath sound.
w(h)ord  An h in parenthesis within a word indicates laughter or breathiness.
(1.2)  Number in parenthesis indicates silence in second/tens of second.
(.)  Period in parenthesis indicates a silence of less than 0.2 second.
.  Period marks a falling intonation contour.
,  Comma marks a continuing intonation contour.
?  Question mark indicates a rising intonation contour.
(Word)  Word in parenthesis indicates transcriber uncertainty of hearing.
( )  Empty parenthesis indicates transcriber unable to hear sounds clearly.
Interlinear gloss abbreviations

AHON  Addressee honorific
ATT  Attributive form
CAUS  Causative form
COND  Conditional
COP  Copula
DAT  Dative
DIM  Diminutive
EMP  Emphatic marker
GEN  Genitive marker
INS  Instrumental marker
LK  Linking marker (genitive)
MOD  Modal marker
NEG  Negation marker
NMLZ  Nominalizer
NOM  Nominative marker
POT  Potential marker
PP  Pragmatic particle
Q  Question particle
QUOT  Quotative particle
RHON  Referent honorific
SE  Sentence extender
TE  Te form (clause linker, directive)
TOP  Topic particle

References


