POSITIONS OF ADDRESS FORMS IN ENGLISH AND JAPANESE

by

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This paper investigates English and Japanese address forms in sentence initial (=SI) and final (=SF) positions, and compares their functional differences with respect to the sentence types in which they are used. The data for analysis were collected from corpora of work place conversations and college tutorials, movie scenarios, and transcripts of TV interviews. In both languages, address forms are used in the speech acts of statement, order, and query, and also as interjections or formulaic expressions; the data are classified in accordance with these uses.

   The comparison shows that more SF positions are used in English statements, orders, and formulaic expressions, while SI positions are more frequent in Japanese statements, questions, and formulaic expressions. In English queries, however, one observes a rise in the use of SI address forms, such that they occur with almost equal frequency as do SF forms. Similarly, Japanese orders occur more frequently in the SF position, bringing these forms of address up to the same level of frequency as that displayed by SI forms. These results can be explained by the general characteristics of the speech act functions in question. Since it is necessary to attract listeners' attention in queries, SI positions are likely to be used there even in English. In orders, on the other hand, it is often necessary to use mitigation (typically at the end of a phrase or sentence containing an ordering speech act), and this would explain the hightened use of SF address forms in Japanese for this particular act of speech.

1. Introduction

Early studies of address forms focused on their variation in relation to factors such as social status, formality or informality, or politeness, which affect the choice of particular address forms (Suzuki 1968; Ervin-Tripp 1969; Philipsen and Huspek 1985; Quirk et al. 1985; Brown and Levinson 1987:107-11; Wolfson 1992; Holmes 1992:1-6). Recent pragmatic and discourse analytic studies of address forms examine the functions of a particular address form use in a corpus of natural conversations. Such research shows that address forms are not only used to attract attention, but also as devices marking speaker intention, alerting to changes in discourse topics, maintaining the flow

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of conversation, etc. (Wierzbicka 1992; Kasper and Blum-Kulka 1993; Verschueren 1999:84; Länsisalmi 1999).

The present study examines the positions of address forms in English and Japanese in light of the contrast between their referential and affective functions. In order to understand the relationship between address form positions and these functions, occurrences of SI and SF address forms in declarative, interrogative, and imperative sentences in both languages are examined; these sentence types represent speech acts of statement, query, and order, respectively, which differ in their affective or referential functions.

The English samples were collected from the scenarios of the movies *Good Will Hunting* (1998) (=GWH), *American Beauty* (1999) (=AB), *As Good As It Gets* (1997) (=AGAIG), and from two TV interviews from *Larry King Live* (2000), one with Al and Tipper Gore (=LK1), and another with Frederick Forsyth, Denise Austin, William Coplin, and David Wise (=LK2). The Japanese samples were obtained from the scenario of a Japanese TV drama, *Futarikko* (1996; The Twin sisters; =Twin Sisters), the conversational corpus of *Josei no Kotoba: Shokubahen* (Women's Language: Workplace Speech, 1993; =Workplace), a recording by the author of Japanese college tutorial sessions (Tsuda 1999; =Tutorial), and the transcribed corpora of five TV entertainment interview programs, *Mie to Ryoko no Oshaberi Dorobo* (Mie and Ryoko: 'Thieves' of Conversation, 1981; =Mie), *Sanshi no Bakusho Bijo Taidan* (Sanshi's Hilarious Conversations with Beauties, 1982; =Sanshi), and three programs from *Tamori no Waratte Iitomo* (Tamori's 'It's OK to laugh', 1996; =Tamori A, B, C).

Using fiction as data for conversation analysis has often been criticized, the data not being natural or authentic, or so it is said. As Sifianou (1992) claims, however, literature and drama can greatly contribute to the study of social interaction. She says:

> I firmly believe that literature, particularly plays, can be a valuable source of data for sociolinguistic research. … Not only does it reveal their [the speakers'] use of language in a variety of situations given in context, but also their attitudes and values about language itself. This kind of extensive variation is very difficult to capture in any manageable corpus of fieldwork data. (Sifianou 1992:5-6)

As a preliminary data source for further studies based on corpora of natural conversation, movie or TV scenarios and TV interviews are used in addition to the natural conversation data analyzed in this paper.

2. Classification of English Address Forms and their Functions

There are 365 address forms in the English scenarios and interviews, and they have been classified into SI and SF positions. Mid-sentence address forms used in coordinate or complex sentences (such as (1) and (2) below) are classified as SF address forms because of the finite verb forms in the clauses preceding or following the address forms, such that the latter may be regarded as independent from those clauses. Consequently, 'Melvin' in (1) and 'Sean' in (2) are regarded as SF address forms.

    (1)   Carol: There is a limit, Melvin, and I can't handle you teaching my son manners. (AGAIG: 57)

    (2)   Lambeau: What problems does he have, Sean, that he is better off as a janitor or in jail or hanging around with – (GWH: 248)

Independent address forms used after an interjection or a short formulaic phrase (as in (3) and (4) below) are thus regarded as instances of SF address forms, even though the clauses in question are very short and other sentences may follow immediately.

    (3)   Angela: Oh my god, Jane. (AB: 60)

    (4)   King: Come on, Tipper. (LK1: 6)

Table 1 shows the results of the classification based on this criterion.

Table 1. Address Forms and their Positions in English

Data Source	SI	SF	Total
GWH	27	107	134
AB	43	64	107
AGAIG	20	59	79
LK1	10	19	29
LK2	1	15	16
Total	101	264	365
Ratio	28%	72%	100%

As the table shows, 72% of the 365 English address forms are used in SF positions.

In order to see why SF positions are preferred in English, the occurrences of SI and SF address forms are classified into declarative, imperative, and interrogative sentences, with the representative speech act functions of statement, order, and query respectively (as illustrated in (5), (6), and (7) below).

(5)   Lambeau: Sean, I came here out of courtesy. (GWH: 198)

(6)   Melvin: Shut up, kids! (AGAIG: 58)

(7)   Jane: Dad, what do you expect? (AB: 22)

While an imperative sentence may be further interpreted as an order, request, etc., depending on its context, all imperative sentences in the data are simply classified as orders.

In the three sentence types which include both SI and SF address forms, one finds interjections or short formulaic expressions with affective or phatic functions, as shown in (8) and (9).

(8)   King: Come on, Tipper. (LK 1: 6)

(9)   Lester: Well, nice to meet you, Ricky. (AB: 55)

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'Come on' in (8) is an imperative sentence, but it is also a formulaic expression frequently used in conversations. Rather than classifying such formulaic expressions under the heading of statement, order, or query in accordance with their sentence types, they are grouped separately under the heading of 'phatic function'. In the same way, (9) is a statement, but at the same time it is a formulaic expression of greeting whose function is mainly phatic. These expressions could be sub-classified further into greetings, apologies, swear words, etc.; here, they are grouped under the phatic label.

According to their SI and SF positions, the samples have been classified into the following categories: those that occur in declarative, imperative, and interrogative sentences (corresponding to the speech act functions of statement, order, and query, respectively), and those used with formulaic or phatic expressions. In fact, it is not always possible to make an unambiguous classification of these samples, since an utterance is likely to have more than one function. However, only the primary interpretation in context is selected as an occurrence of a particular speech act.[2] Table 2 shows the result of this classification.

Table 2. Speech Act Functions and SI and SF Address Forms in English

	Statement	Order	Query	Phatic	Total
SI	41	15	24	21	101
SI ratio	29%	24%	51%	19%	
SF	101	48	23	92	264
SF ratio	71%	76%	49%	81%	
Total	142	63	47	113	365

As Table 2 shows, address forms in SF position total 71% in statements, 76% in orders, 81% in phatics; they show the tendency of English address forms to prefer the SF position in these functions. However, of the queries, 51% are in SI and 49% in SF positions, showing that SF positions as such are not necessarily used more often

in English. Figure 1 illustrates these differences in ratio between the SI and SF address forms for the different speech act categories.

Figure 1. Speech Act Functions and Ratio of English SI and SF Address Forms in English
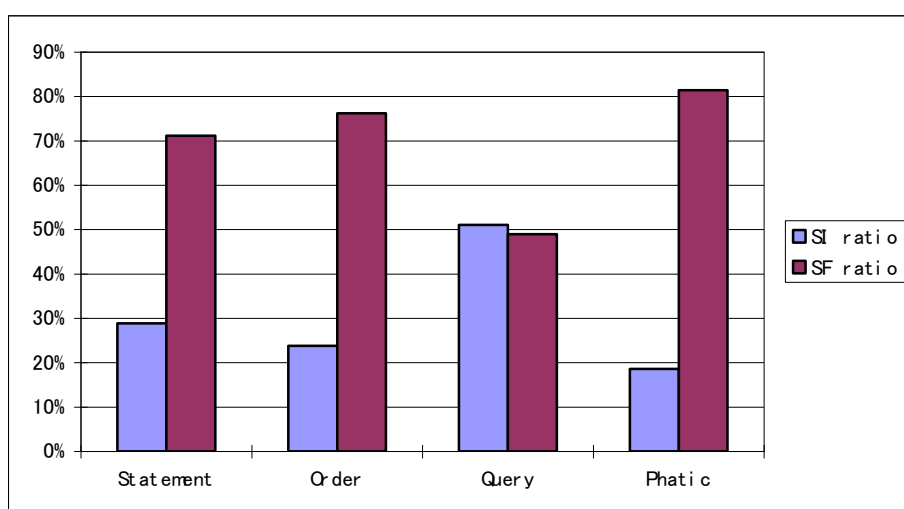
It is not difficult to understand why the SI and SF address forms are equally frequently used in queries in English: a question must be addressed to a specific person to attract his or her attention, which makes it natural that such address forms should be placed in the SI position despite the fact that the SF position is preferred for other speech act categories.

3. Classification of Japanese Address Forms and their Functions

In order to compare the use of English and Japanese address forms, the Japanese data listed above were examined in the same way as were the English data; 155 address form samples were collected. When one considers the total amount of data examined, address forms in Japanese are seen to be scarce, especially in the corpora of work place talks, tutorials, or TV interviews. It would be necessary to further

analyze the functions of address forms in Japanese society to understand why address forms are not used as often as they are in English. In part, this may be due to the fact that in Japanese, it is easy to tell who is addressed or who is mentioned, based on the verb forms and other politeness markers: thus, it may not be necessary to use address forms. On the other hand, address forms seem to play a greater social role in English speaking societies in acknowledging, and showing concern for, the addressee, in addition to attracting his or her attention. (See Table 3).

Table 3. Address forms and their positions in Japanese

Data Source	SI	SF	Total
Futarikko	61	32	93
Workplace	36	14	50
Tutorial	6	1	7
Mie	0	2	2
Sanshi	0	2	2
TamoriA,B,C	1	0	1
Total	104	51	155
Ratio	67%	33%	100%

Table 3 shows that 67% of the 155 Japanese samples are in the SI position – a striking contrast with the English result, where only 28% of the 365 samples occupied the SI position.

In the following example, (10), a group of students and their professor are talking. The professor asks who is an expert in old popular music, and one of the students asks if the professor was talking about her. Then, another student addresses this person (named Nat), beginning (in order to specify the person addressed) her utterance with the address form *Nat-chan*. (*-chan* is a suffix of 'respectful endearment', which has no equivalent in English.)

(10) Student: *Nat-chan   furui   ongaku   suki   jan*
               Nat-chan   old   music   like   NEG
          Nat, [you] like old music, don't you? (Tutorial: 77)

In this example, an address form is used to get the attention of the addressee and to indicate who is the focus of the conversational topic. The subject of the sentence is not stated because it is easily understood from the context.

Another factor playing in here is that (as among others, Kobayashi (1997) has remarked), Japanese second person 'pronouns' (*taishodai-meishi*) are dispreferred; instead, family names or first names are used. The student's utterance in (10) is an example of this. 'Pronouns' such as *anata*, *anta*, or *omae* (all meaning 'you') are mostly used as address forms after a statement of a claim or judgment, when the speaker wants to make sure that what s/he has said is understood by the addressee, as shown in the following example.

(11) *Hakkiri iina   anta   hakkiri*
     Clearly   say   you   clearly
     Say it clearly, you say it clearly!
     (Kobayashi 1997:128)

However, as Kobayashi also points out, there are not many examples of such use of 'pronouns' in her data; in fact, address forms of the type 'NN (Last Name) + san' ('Ms., Mrs., Mr. NN'), or 'NN (Last Name) + sensei' ('Professor NN') are used more often as address forms than are second person 'pronouns'; they are often placed in SI positions, where their function is to attract the attention of the addressee, as shown in (12).

(12) *[Last name]-san koohii nomi masu?*
     [Last Name] san coffee drink (RISING INTONATION)
     Mrs/Ms/Mr [Last Name], would you like some coffee?
     (Kobayashi 1997:129)

This fact may help explain the relative frequency of SI address forms in my samples.

The generally less frequent use of SF address forms may also have something to do with the occurrence of Japanese particles such as *ne*, *kana*, *yo* in sentence final position. These particles, just like English tag questions or first name address terms in SF position, show intimacy or friendly feelings. Hence, they are frequently found in the corpora of work place conversations and tutoring sessions, as well as in TV interview programs, as shown in (13):

(13)   *Chicchai ho ga   tanoshisooda   yo ne* (Tutorial data: 138)
       [A] smaller one SUB seems interesting, doesn't it?
       (Tsuda 1999)

It is not possible at this point to reach a firm conclusion as to how the functions of address forms are affected by these and other particles in Japanese; however, the characteristics of Japanese, as outlined in the preceding, seem to hint at a plausible explanation.

The Japanese data are classified according to their functions in the same way as was done for the English samples. Table 4 shows the occurrences of SI and SF address forms for each speech act category.

Table 4. Speech Act Functions and SI and SF Address Forms in Japanese

	Statement	Order	Query	Phatic	Total
SI	22	12	44	26	104
SI ratio	65%	50%	75%	68%	
SF	12	12	15	12	51
SF ratio	35%	50%	25%	32%	
Total	34	24	59	38	155

Table 4 shows that more SI address forms are used in statements, queries, and phatics in Japanese than is the case in English; the exception is the speech act of ordering, for which the SI and SF positions are equally frequent. Figure 2 shows this contrast in SI and SF positions in different speech act functions.

Figure 2. Speech Act Functions and Ratio of SI and SF Address in Japanese
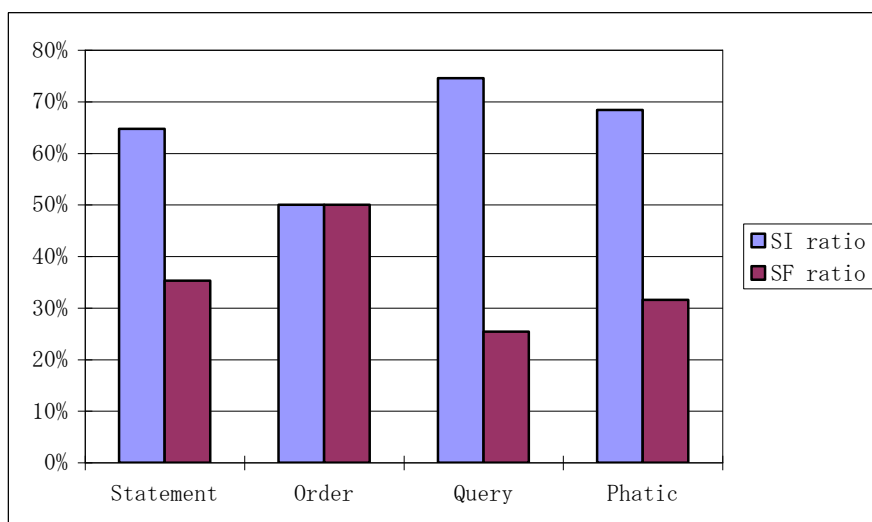
It is interesting to note the different ratios of SI and SF positions in English (Figure 1) compared to Japanese (Figure 2). In English, more address forms are used in SF positions in statements, orders, and phatics, whereas in queries, address forms occur evenly in the SI and SF positions. In Japanese, however, SI address forms are more frequently used in statements, queries, and phatics, whereas in orders, SF address forms occur as frequently as they do in SI positions.

At first glance, such a disparity in the occurrence of SI and SF address forms between queries in English and orders in Japanese would make it appear as if these were independent phenomena in each language. However, it is possible to explain such irregularities taking the general speech act characteristics of queries and orders into consideration.

In English, SF address forms seem to be preferred in statements, orders, and in 'phatic' use, the latter presumably for affective purposes. In contrast, SI and SF address forms are equally frequently used in queries, as the referential functions of address forms are more important there than are the affective functions; hence, queries prefer the SI position in order to attract the addressee's attention. This preference obtains both in English and in Japanese. Since furthermore,

Japanese favors the SI position for statements, queries, and phatic contexts, it is not necessary to treat the SI position for queries in that language as a special case.

For orders, on the other hand, the SF position tends to be favored, as mitigation is usually necessary in a speech act involving a potential face threat (an 'FTA'; Brown and Levinson 1987:61-62). Thus, while for Japanese orders, SF positions are just as frequent as are SI positions, for other speech acts, SI positions are preferred. In English, on the other hand, the SF position is, so to speak, the default position: it is frequent in the case of orders (thus satisfying a possible need for mitigation), but also in most other speech acts (the exception being queries, which require listener attention rather than mitigation on the part of the speaker).

4. Discussion

The analysis of the data shows that English and Japanese address forms are often used in the speech acts of statement, order, or query, as well as with formulaic expressions and in other, phatic functions. In English, 72% of the 365 address form samples are used in SF positions. In Japanese, 33% of the 155 samples are used in SF positions, in remarkable contrast to the address forms used in the English data.

While SF expressions are more frequently used in English for statements, orders, and in phatic functions, in queries (where it is necessary to attract the listener's attention), SI and SF address forms are almost equally frequent. In Japanese, on the other hand, SI address forms are more frequently employed in statements, queries, and in phatic functions, whereas in orders, the SF and SI positions are frequent; this is because it may be necessary to mitigate a speaker's intention in making a request or giving an order, such speech acts usually posing a face-threat to others.

Concluding, then, we may say that the choice of address form positions in English and Japanese seems to be influenced both by each language's general preference for address form positions and by the

characteristics of the speech act functions in which the address forms are used.

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Notes

1. The original idea for this paper came from the discussions in the meetings of the Politeness Study Group, which was presented at the Group's workshop at the 37th conference of Japan Association of College English Teachers (JACET) held in Okayama, Japan in 1998.
2. Information on prosodic features would be necessary to perform a more precise analysis.

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