

Honorific Words in Japanese and Balinese Languages: A Case Study of Social Interaction Dynamics

Ida Ayu Putri Gita Ardiantari¹, Ni Wayan Meidariani¹, Anak Agung Ayu Dian Andriyani¹

¹Universitas Mahasaswati Denpasar

*Corresponding Author: idayupugitaa@unmas.ac.id

Abstract

Honorifics are words that show respect and politeness. They are important in languages like Balinese and Japanese because they reflect the culture and social rules of the society. This study aims to examine the use of honorifics in Balinese and Japanese languages, with a focus on their dynamic role in everyday communication. The research investigates how honorific expressions reflect cultural norms, social hierarchies, and interpersonal relationships in both linguistic contexts. A qualitative comparative method was employed, using data collected from native speakers through participant observation, and structured interviews. The primary sources of data include recorded conversations, cultural texts, and interviews with Balinese and Japanese speakers. Data collection techniques involved field study and discourse analysis, while the data were analyzed using sociolinguistic and pragmatic frameworks. The results showed that Balinese honorifics come from traditions like caste, age, and social status, while Japanese honorifics depend more on the situation and how people relate to each other, influenced by context and the nature of interpersonal relationships. These results highlight the role of honorifics in maintaining social harmony and expressing cultural values. The study contributes to a deeper understanding of politeness strategies across cultures and offers insights for cross-cultural communication and sociolinguistic research.

Article History

Received: 24 May 2025

Accepted: 3 October 2025

Published: 3 October 2025

Keywords

Balinese; communication; honorific; Japanese; social interaction

How to cite:

Ardiantari, I. A. P. G., Meidariani, N. W., & Andriyani, A. A. A. D. (2025). Honorific Words in Japanese and Balinese Languages: A Case Study of Social Interaction Dynamics. *Humanus: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu-Ilmu Humaniora*, 24(2), 223-235. DOI: 10.24036/humanus.v24i2.133929

Introduction

Linguistic politeness can be defined as the ways in which language is employed in conversation to show consideration for the feelings and desires of one's interlocutors, to create and uphold interpersonal relationships (so-called politic behavior), and to comply with the rules for what society or one's culture considers appropriate behavior (Olmen, 2017). The language politeness strategies is affected by the cultural background of both spouses in intercultural marriages (Andriyani, 2022: 134). Purnomo (2019: 140) added consideration, friendliness, and pleasantness, respect, appropriateness, and modesty are all examples of politeness. Fauziati (2013) stated that in English, polite language may be

characterized by the use of indirect speech, the use of respectful forms of address systems like, Sir, Madam, or the use of formulaic utterances like, please, excuse me, sorry, thank you, etc. The respectful forms of address systems as stated above is also known as honorific words which are much effected by the politeness system of the society.

Honorific words play a crucial role in communication systems, reflecting cultural values and norms within a society. In daily social interactions, the proper use of honorifics not only shapes and strengthens interpersonal relationships but also signifies politeness and respect. Every language in the world possesses a unique greeting system, and the appropriate use of these greetings is considered an essential aspect of linguistic politeness. Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory (1987) provides a foundational framework for understanding how honorifics function as strategies to maintain face and mitigate face-threatening acts in conversation. Additionally, Leech's Politeness Principle (1983) emphasizes the role of honorifics in maximizing politeness and minimizing imposition, particularly in hierarchical or formal contexts. In languages such as Balinese and Japanese, honorifics are not merely linguistic forms but are deeply tied to sociocultural structures, as supported by the Ethnography of Communication approach (Hymes, 1974), which highlights the importance of context, participants, and cultural norms in shaping language use. Every language possesses a unique greeting and honorific system, and the appropriate use of these forms is considered a vital aspect of linguistic politeness and pragmatic competence.

An honorific is a term, title, or grammatical construction that conveys social deference, civility, and respect (Richard, 2020). Honorific are small words that come before a name (a prefix) or after a name (a suffix) that means to give or show honor or respect (Rex-Horoi, 2023). In English and Indonesian, the most common forms of honorifics are honorary titles used before names in salutation, for example *Mr. John*, *Pak Ketut*, *Princes William*; but it can be came after names especially in Japanese, for example *Yuri San*, *Hana Sensei* and etc.

As discussed above, the use of honorifics is highly context-dependent and shaped by the sociocultural norms of each linguistic community. While honorifics exist across languages, their patterns of usage vary significantly. This study explores the dynamics of honorifics in Balinese and Japanese, two languages with special rules for showing respect and social roles. These languages were selected due to their rich and complex honorific structures, which are deeply influenced by distinct cultural hierarchies and social frameworks.

The analysis of Balinese honorifics is particularly unique due to their deep interrelation with traditional caste systems and evolving modern social identities. Unlike many other languages, Balinese honorifics are embedded at the lexical and grammatical levels, directly reflecting the speaker's and listener's social status. According to Ardiantari (2024), honorific usage in Balinese is not only a linguistic choice but a cultural obligation, shaped by both ancestral lineage and contemporary factors such as education, occupation, and economic standing. Mayuko (2015) further emphasizes that Balinese speakers consistently consider social group distinctions, such as caste and class, when selecting appropriate terms of address and speech levels. Balinese society traditionally recognizes two major social groupings: *Tri Wangsa* (*Brahmana*, *Ksatria*, *Sudra*) and *Jaba Wangsa*. These classifications profoundly influence language use, with specific honorific forms and vocabulary reserved for interactions across and within these groups. This stratified linguistic behaviour makes Balinese a compelling subject for sociolinguistic analysis, as it showcases how language functions as a mirror of both historical and contemporary social structures. In contrast, Japanese honorifics operate within a

framework of situational politeness, where the speaker's relationship to the listener, that is defined by factors such as age, rank, and familiarity, determines the level of formality. Errors in honorific usage in Japanese are often interpreted as breaches of etiquette, underscoring the importance of linguistic precision in maintaining social harmony. Together, the comparison of Balinese and Japanese honorifics reveals how language can both preserve tradition and adapt to modern social dynamics.

Previous studies have explored the use of honorifics across various languages, revealing that honorific expressions often manifest through personal pronouns, greetings, and terms of address influenced by factors such as status, familiarity, emotion, and activity. For instance, Sunarni (2023) examined honorifics in the Dayak Kanayatn language in Banying village, identifying kinship-based expressions rooted in both blood and marital relations. Similarly, Sartika (2016) found that Manggarai honorifics are shaped by kinship ties, professional roles, and self-reference, indicating a strong link between social identity and linguistic form.

Rahayu (2014) compared Javanese and Japanese honorifics, concluding that honorific diction is shaped by social context, yet the study lacked a deeper exploration of pragmatic variation and situational dynamics. Okamoto (2009) provided a more nuanced view of Japanese honorifics, emphasizing that their use is governed by social norms and relational distance. He argued that honorifics are obligatory when addressing someone of higher status with whom the speaker is not intimate, while their use becomes excessive or unnatural in more equal or familiar relationships. Surya (2022) extended this analysis to workplace communication, showing that honorific usage in Japanese emails reflects hierarchical awareness but is not strictly determined by rank alone.

While these studies offer valuable insights into the sociolinguistic functions of honorifics, they tend to focus narrowly on static social categories such as kinship or occupational status. Few address the dynamic interplay between tradition and modernity, or how honorifics adapt to shifting social contexts. Moreover, the comparative dimension—especially between languages with distinct cultural foundations like Balinese and Japanese—is often underexplored. This study contributes to filling that gap by examining how honorifics in both languages reflect not only social hierarchy but also evolving cultural values and communicative strategies.

Building on the literature reviewed above, a clear research gap emerges between previous research and this current research. Previous studies have examined honorifics within individual languages which often focusing on kinship terms, occupational status, or formal speech, they rarely offer comparative analyses across culturally distinct languages. Moreover, few have explored how honorifics function dynamically in everyday social interactions, adapting to both traditional norms and modern communicative contexts. While this study, entitled *Honorific Words in Japanese and Balinese Languages: A Case Study of Social Interaction Dynamics*, addresses this gap by investigating how honorifics operate in two linguistically rich and culturally complex societies. This research aimed to identify and compare the dynamics of greetings in Balinese and Japanese languages using a socio-pragmatic approach. By comparing Balinese and Japanese honorific systems, the research highlights not only structural differences but also the sociocultural values embedded in language use. The importance of this study lies in its contribution to cross-cultural pragmatics and sociolinguistics, offering insights into how language reflects and negotiates social relationships. This research explored how social contexts shape language use and interpretation. By focusing on the greeting systems in Balinese and Japanese languages, this study sheds light on how individuals

navigate social hierarchies, express respect, and maintain social harmony through their choice of greetings and honorifics. This exploration not only deepens our understanding of the role of greetings and honorifics in culturally distinct societies but also contributes to the broader discourse on how language reflects and reinforces social structures and interpersonal relationships. The findings of this research were expected to provide new insights and references regarding the dynamics of greetings in these two languages. Furthermore, the findings have practical value for intercultural communication, language education, and the preservation of linguistic heritage in increasingly globalized societies.

Literature Review

This study is grounded in key theories of politeness that help explain the role of honorifics as a linguistic strategy for managing social relationships. Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory (1987) provides a foundational framework, positing that speakers use politeness strategies to preserve the listener's face, either by expressing solidarity (positive politeness) or by showing deference and minimizing imposition (negative politeness). Honorifics, particularly in hierarchical societies like those of Bali and Japan, function primarily as negative politeness strategies, allowing speakers to acknowledge social distance and respect status differences. Leech's Politeness Principle (1983) further supports this view by emphasizing the importance of tact and generosity in communication. Honorific expressions fulfill the Tact Maxim by reducing potential imposition and the Generosity Maxim by elevating the listener's status through respectful language. In both Balinese and Japanese, honorifics are not merely optional politeness markers but are deeply embedded in the grammar and lexicon, reflecting cultural expectations and social norms. By applying these theories, this study analyzes how speakers in each language navigate social hierarchies and interpersonal dynamics through honorific usage, revealing the intricate relationship between language, politeness, and cultural values.

Previous research has shown that honorifics in various languages often reflect social structures such as kinship, status, and familiarity (e.g., Sunarni, 2023; Rahayu, 2014; Sartika, 2016; Okamoto, 2009). However, most of these studies focus on single-language contexts and do not explore the comparative dynamics of honorific use across cultures. This study aims to fill that gap by examining the sociopragmatic use of greetings and honorifics in Balinese and Japanese, highlighting how language reflects and negotiates social hierarchies in distinct cultural settings.

In Japanese, honorifics are intricately tied to social hierarchy, formality, and interpersonal distance. Okamoto (2009) emphasizes that the use or nonuse of honorifics is governed by social norms, where factors such as relative status and intimacy dictate linguistic choices. For instance, honorifics are obligatory when addressing someone of higher status in a formal context, while their use may be considered unnatural or overly polite in casual interactions among equals. Surya (2022) further explores this dynamic in workplace communication, analyzing honorific usage in emails among employees in a Japanese company. His findings reveal that while honorifics are used to signal respect toward superiors, their application is flexible and context-dependent, suggesting that social status alone does not rigidly determine honorific use. These studies highlight the nuanced pragmatics of Japanese honorifics, where language serves not only to reflect hierarchy but also to manage relational subtleties and situational appropriateness.

While honorifics have been widely studied within individual linguistic and cultural contexts, comparative analyses remain limited. Most existing research focuses either on regional languages such as Dayak Kanayatn, Manggarai, and Javanese, or on Japanese in

isolation. These studies offer valuable insights into how honorifics function within specific social frameworks, yet they rarely explore how similar linguistic strategies operate across cultures with differing social norms. The intersection of Balinese and Japanese honorifics presents a unique opportunity to examine how language reflects and negotiates social relationships in distinct cultural settings. By adopting a socio-pragmatic approach, this study aims to bridge that gap, offering a comparative perspective on how greetings and honorifics are shaped by social hierarchies, cultural expectations, and interpersonal dynamics. This contribution not only enriches the understanding of honorific systems but also advances the broader discourse on language and social interaction.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative socio-pragmatic approach using a comparative case study design, chosen for its effectiveness in exploring language use within specific cultural and social contexts. A qualitative method is appropriate because the research focused on understanding the nuanced, context-dependent use of honorifics in natural communication rather than quantifying linguistic features. Socio-pragmatic allows for analysis of how social norms, relationships, and cultural expectations influence language choices, particularly honorific expressions.

The data observed in this study consist of spoken interactions, interview responses, and cultural documents involving honorific usage in Japanese and Balinese. These data were selected to capture both the actual use of honorifics in daily life and the perceptions of native speakers regarding politeness and social hierarchy. The focus on native speakers living in Denpasar, Gianyar, and Badung was intentional, as these areas represent a concentration of Japanese residents and diverse Balinese communities, making them ideal for comparative sociolinguistic analysis. Participants included approximately 20 individuals, representing a range of ages, professions, and social backgrounds. Balinese participants were selected from both *Tri Wangsa* (*Brahmana, Ksatria, Sudra*) and *Jaba Wangsa* groups to reflect traditional caste influences, while Japanese participants were chosen to represent various levels of formality and workplace hierarchy.

Data collection was conducted through these techniques: 1) field observation in natural settings such as workplaces, family gatherings, and public spaces to document spontaneous use of honorifics; and 2) semi-structured interviews to explore participants' views on honorifics, including their understanding of politeness, social status, and appropriate usage.

Data analysis followed a thematic and comparative approach, guided by Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory (1987) and Leech's Politeness Principle (1983). These frameworks were used to interpret how honorifics function as politeness strategies and how they reflect social dynamics in each language. Thematic coding was applied to categorize honorific expressions based on context, speaker-addressee relationships, and social variables. To ensure data validity, the study employed triangulation by cross-verifying findings from observations and interviews. Member checking was also conducted, where selected participants reviewed and confirmed the accuracy of interview interpretations. Additionally, peer debriefing with fellow researchers helped refine the coding process and reduce bias.

Results and Discussion

Results

To better understand the patterns of honorific usage across different social contexts, the following table presents a comparative overview of honorific word usage in Japanese and Balinese social interactions, categorized by speaker relationships and cultural background. It illustrates how different honorific forms are employed depending on age dynamics, caste affiliation, and intercultural contexts, offering insight into the nuanced ways language reflects social hierarchy and respect across both cultures.

Table 1

Honorific Word in Balinese and Japanese

No.	Speaker and Interlocutor	Honorific Word	Examples
1 Balinese & Balinese (Tri Wangsa)			
	Older- Younger	- Caste + name (Gus, Dayu, Gung, Gusti, Dewa) - Name	Gus Anom, Gung Giri, Gusti Ayu, Dewa Rai, Prabu
	Younger - older	Ratu, Atu/ tu, Jik, Bli, Mbok	Ratu Pedanda Istri, Tu rah, Bli Gus Parta
	Same age	- Caste + name - Name	Gus Puja, Selly
2 Balinese & Japanese (Triwangsa)			
	Older- younger	- Caste + name - Jero	Gus Adi, Gung Tiwi, Jero Jepun
	Younger - older	Ratu, Atu/ tu, Jik, Bli, Mbok, Bu Jero	Ratu Pedanda Istri, Gung Biang Niti, Jik Gung Ade, Bu Jero Rijasa
	Same age	- Caste + name - Jero	Gung Tiwi, Jero Suli, Hana
3 Balinese & Balinese (Jaba)			
	Older- younger	- Balinese name - Balinese name + real name	Wayan, Putu, Tu Adi
	Younger - older	Pak, Bu, Mé, Iwa, Bli, papa, Mbok + name	Pak de, Iwa Nyoman, Bli Wayan
	Same age	- Balinese name + real name - Name	Kadek, Tu Ayu, Chiko
4 Balinese & Japanese (Jaba)			
	Older- younger	- Balinese name + real name - Name	Putu Bagus, Kadek Cika, Tu Yoshi
	Younger - older	Pak, Bu, Mé, Iwa, Bli, papa, Mbok + name	Pak Yan, Bli Putu, Mok Yuki
	Same age	- Balinese name + real name - Name	Komang, Ryota
5 Japanese & Japanese			
	Older- younger	Name + -chan	Yuri chan, Ryu chan
	Younger - older	Family name + -san	Kimura san, Yoshimura san
	Same age	Name	Aiko, Tanaka

From the table above can be seen several honorifics that found on the daily conversation between Balinese and Balinese, Balinese and Japanese, and Japanese and Japanese. The data categories into three groups of speaker and interlocutor based on their age. This was done because honorific can be different in their usage based on the age of the speaker in order to show politeness. The speaker also devided into caste group or Wangsa of its speaker, especially for Balinese speakers, such as Balinese & Balinese (*Tri Wangsa*), Balinese & Japanese (*Triwangsa*), Balinese & Balinese (*Jaba*), Balinese & Japanese (*Jaba*), and Japanese & Japanese.

The data of honorific that can be found were the use of caste address, Balinese name, and real name. On the case address, it can be found the use of case address only and the use of caste address with real name. The caste address such as **Gus** (man in caste Brahmana), **Dayu** (woman in caste *Brahmana*), **Gung** (Caste *Ksatria*), **Gusti** (Caste *Ksatria*), and **Dewa** (Caste *Ksatria*) which normally used by the older to speak to the younger. In addition, there are **Ratu** (for priest), **Atu/ tu** (shortened of ratu but can be used to call ordinary pople in triwangsa who are not priest) + caste, **Atu/ tu + name** or (+) **Aji** (father)/ **Biang** (mother), **Jik** (from word "aji" means father), **Bu** (from word "ibu" means mother), **Mama**, **Bli** (elder brother), and **Mbok** (elder sister) which normally used by younger speaker to speak to the older. There is also **Jero** (given name for a wife from lower case or a non-caste) that can be used by both older to younger or younger to the older. The other Balinese address that can be found are the use of Balinese name such as **Wayan/ Putu** (first child), **Made/ Kadek/ Kade** (second child), **Nyoman/ Komang** (third child), and **Ketut** (forth child). These Balinese names can used after the caste address or without caste address. These names normally used by the Balinese in *Jaba Wangsa*. For the speaker in the same age, they use the caste address with or without real name if they are in *Triwangsa* or Balinese name with or without real name if they are in *Jaba Wangsa*. These kinds of Balinese address also can be categories into honorific because the reason of its usage is to show the social status and also for politeness purpose. In addition, for Japanese speaker who marriage with Balinese, they will also use these terms. However, for Japanese natives, they prefer to use their Japanese term whit the use of **-chan** by the older to address the younger and **-san** by the younger to address the older.

Discussion

Dialogue 1

Context

Speaker : Jero Jepun (wife) (Japanese woman)
 Speech partner : Dewa Bagus (husband) (Balinese)
 Location : Residential house
 Situation : The wife servers her husband a glass of coffee.

Dialogue

Speaker : *Ajik, ini kohinya. Dimana ditaruh?* (Ajik, this is your coffee. Where can I put it?)
 Interlocutor : *Ya, ma, taruh sana aja dulu.* (Alright, ma. Just put over there.)

Analysis

This exchange between a Japanese wife and her Balinese husband illustrates the use of culturally embedded honorifics within a domestic setting. The wife's use of "**Ajik**" to address her husband reflects a Balinese honorific term traditionally used to show respect toward a male figure of higher status, particularly within the *Triwangsa* caste. This aligns with Ardiantari (2024), who emphasizes that honorifics in Balinese are deeply tied to social hierarchy and familial roles.

From a theoretical perspective, "**Ajik**" functions as a negative politeness strategy in Brown and Levinson's (1987) framework, where the speaker seeks to avoid imposing and maintain the addressee's face by showing deference. The husband's response, using "**Ma**," a term of endearment for mother or wife, reflects positive politeness, emphasizing intimacy and solidarity. This reciprocal use of address terms demonstrates how honorifics can serve dual functions: maintaining respect while reinforcing emotional bonds.

Compared to Japanese honorific norms, which often emphasize formal distance and situational appropriateness (Okamoto, 2009), this Balinese usage reveals a more relational and caste-based approach. The wife's adoption of Balinese honorifics also suggests cultural adaptation, where Japanese speakers in intercultural marriages may integrate local politeness strategies to align with social expectations.

This finding supports Leech's (1983) Politeness Principle, particularly the Tact Maxim (minimizing cost to others) and the Agreement Maxim (seeking harmony), as both speakers navigate respect and affection through culturally resonant language. Overall, the dialogue highlights how honorifics are not static but contextually negotiated, reflecting both tradition and interpersonal dynamics.

Dialogue 2

Context

Speaker : Gung Putra (brother of Agung Oka)
Speech partner : Jero Rijasa (sister in law (Japanese))
Location : Residential house
Situation : Gung Putra look for his brother, Gung Oka, while the sister in law is sweeping the yard.

Dialogue

Speaker : *Mok Jero, Bli Gung dija?* (**Mok Jero**, where is Bli Gung?)
Speech partner : *Gung Ajinya di luar masang Penjor.* (Gung Aji is outside decorating Penjor)
Speaker : *Sama siapa?* (with whom?)
Speech partner : *Sama Gung Sely* (with Gung Sely)

Analysis:

This dialogue illustrates the nuanced use of Balinese honorifics within an intercultural family setting. Gung Putra addresses his Japanese sister-in-law as "**Mok Jero**," a compound honorific combining "**Mok**" (older sister) and "**Jero**," a title conferred upon women who marry into the *Triwangsa* caste. This reflects the Balinese practice of assigning titles based on marital and social status, as noted by Ardiantari (2022), where honorifics serve both relational and hierarchical functions.

The use of "*Bli Gung*" to refer to his brother, Agung Oka, reinforces the respect embedded in sibling relationships. "**Bli**" is a common Balinese term for older brother, but

its use here also signals deference and familial hierarchy. Interestingly, Jero Rijasa refers to her husband as “**Gung Aji**,” blending the caste title “**Gung**” with “**Aji**,” a term of reverence. This aligns with Brown and Levinson’s (1987) negative politeness strategies, where honorifics mitigate imposition and uphold social distance.

The dialogue reflects a hybrid politeness system, where Japanese speakers adopt Balinese honorifics to navigate local social norms. This supports Okamoto’s (2009) argument that honorific usage is contextually fluid and often adapted in intercultural settings. The exchange also demonstrates Leech’s (1983) Politeness Principle, particularly the Approbation Maxim, where speakers avoid disagreement and emphasize respect.

Dialogue 3

Context

Speaker : Wayan (husband)
 Speech partner : Komang Ayu (a Balinese given name to a wife (Japanese woman))
 Location : Residential house
 Situation : Wayan informed his wife, Komang, that tomorrow they will go to hospital to check for his mother health.

Dialogue

Speaker : *Mang, be maan bli nyambatang buin mani kal ngatuang meme check up ae?* (Mang, I told you that tomorrow we will escote mother to have a health check, have I?)
 Interlocutor : *Iya kah? Pidan bli ngorahang? Engsap iyang.* (Have you? When did you tell me? I forgot.)
 Speaker : *Ipuan asanange* (It was two days ago, if I’m not wrong?)

Analysis:

This exchange between Wayan and his Japanese wife, Komang Ayu, showcases the integration of Balinese naming conventions into intercultural marriage. Wayan addresses his wife as “**Mang**,” a shortened form of “**Komang**,” which denotes the third-born child in Balinese tradition. This reflects a kinship-based honorific system, where names signify both birth order and familial belonging.

The use of “**Mang**” by Wayan is not merely affectionate but also a marker of in-group identity, suggesting that his wife has been linguistically and socially assimilated into the *Jaba Wangsa* group. This supports Holmes and Stubbe’s (2003) view that address terms function as identity markers in workplace and domestic discourse.

Komang’s use of “**Bli**” to refer to her husband further illustrates her adaptation to Balinese norms. While “**Bli**” traditionally means older brother, it is also used by wives to address husbands respectfully. This dual function aligns with Brown and Levinson’s positive politeness strategies, emphasizing solidarity and intimacy.

The dialogue reveals how honorifics in Balinese culture are flexible yet context-sensitive, and how Japanese speakers in mixed marriages navigate these norms to express both respect and emotional closeness.

Dialogue 4

Context

Speaker : Gung Ayu (sister-in-law from husband's relative)
Speech partner : Jero Melati (Japanese woman, a wife of speaker's cousin)
Location : In front of family house
Topic : Talk about *ngayah banjar* (community work)

Dialogue:

Speaker : *Ye, ada Bu Jero Melati, waktu ini tidak sangkep ya?* (yeah, it's **Bu Jero Melati** here, you didn't join *sangkep* last time, did you?) (*sangkep*: a community meeting)
Speech partner : *Iya, Bu Gung, saya lagi ada acara* (I didn't, **Bu Gung**, I had another activity that time)
Speaker : **Bu jero**, sudah dikasi info untuk *ngayah banjar*? (**Bu jero**, have you gotten the information of *ngayah banjar*? (*ngayah*: community work))
Speech partner : *Sudah, kan acaranya besok* (I have, it's tomorrow)
Speaker : *Ya sudah, ketemu besok ya* (oh okay, see you tomorrow)

Analysis:

This interaction between Gung Ayu and Jero Melati highlights the role of social hierarchy and community norms in honorific usage. Gung Ayu, a member of the *Ksatria wangsa*, addresses her cousin's Japanese wife as "**Bu Jero Melati**," combining the formal "**Bu**" (Mrs.) with "**Jero**," a title indicating marriage into the *Triwangsa* caste. This reflects the Balinese practice of assigning honorifics based on both marital status and caste affiliation, as discussed by Geertz (1973).

Jero Melati reciprocates with "**Bu Gung**" showing deference to her husband's relative. The avoidance of using the speaker's personal name ("**Gung Ayu**") underscores the importance of strata-sensitive address terms in Balinese society. This aligns with Leech's Tact Maxim, where speakers minimize imposition by using socially appropriate titles.

The dialogue also illustrates how location and context influence honorific choice. In a public setting like the *banjar* (community), formal titles are preferred to maintain social harmony. This supports the findings of Ardiantari (2022), who notes that Balinese honorifics are highly situational and reflect both relational and societal expectations.

Dialogue 5

Context

Speaker : Mother (Japanese)
Speech partner : Son (7 years old, a child of mixed married between Balinese and Japanese)
Location : Residential house
Topic : Mother asks her son about project activity at school

Dialogue:

Speaker : *Ryota can, tadi gimana di sekolah?* (Ryota, how was your activity at school?)
Speech partner : *Tadi adik dapat stiker, ma. Kata bu guru, gambar adik bagus.* (I got sticker, ma. Teacher said that my drawing was good.)
Penutur : *Wah keren sekali. Sugoidesu ne.* (Wow that's so cool. Sugoidesu ne)

Analysis:

This domestic exchange between a Japanese mother and her mixed-heritage son demonstrates the use of Japanese honorifics and kinship terms in a bilingual household. The mother's use of “-can” (as in “**Ryota-can**”) is a diminutive suffix expressing affection toward children. This aligns with Japanese norms of intimacy and endearment, as described by Okamoto (2009), where honorifics are used to reinforce emotional bonds.

The child's self-reference as “**adik**” (younger sibling) and his use of “**ma**” to address his mother reflect a hybrid linguistic environment, where Balinese and Indonesian terms coexist with Japanese expressions. This supports the idea of code-mixing in intercultural families, where language choices reflect both cultural identity and relational closeness.

The mother's response, “*Sugoidesu ne*,” blends Japanese praise with Indonesian context, showing how language functions as a bridge between cultures. This dialogue exemplifies Brown and Levinson's positive politeness, where praise and affectionate terms maintain harmony and emotional warmth.

Dialogue 6

Context

Speaker : Tanaka (grandfather)

Speech partner : Arumi (granddaughter)

Location : Residential house

Topic : Tanaka asks Arumi to take Puchi (a puppy) go for a walk

Dialogue:

Speaker : **Arumichan.** (Arumi (grandfather calls Arumi))

Speech partner : *Hai.* (Yes, I am)

Penutur : *Puchi o sanpo ni tsureteiku yo* (Take Puchi go for a walk)

Mitra tutur : *Hai, wakarimashita, ojiisan.* (Alright, I get it, grandpa)

Analysis:

This interaction between a Japanese grandfather and his granddaughter illustrates the use of Japanese familial honorifics in maintaining respect and affection across generations. Tanaka's use of “**Arumi chan**” employs the suffix “-chan,” a diminutive form used for children or close family members, indicating affection and familiarity. This aligns with Japanese norms of hierarchical intimacy, where age and relationship dictate honorific choice.

Arumi's response, “**ojiisan**,” is a respectful term for grandfather, showing adherence to vertical politeness structures in Japanese culture. The exchange also uses polite verb forms (“*wakarimashita*”), reinforcing the importance of linguistic politeness in intergenerational communication.

This dialogue supports the findings of Ide (1989), who argues that Japanese honorifics are deeply embedded in social roles and age-based hierarchies. The interaction reflects Brown and Levinson's negative politeness, where respect is shown through formal language and honorifics, even in close relationships.

Conclusion

This study has provided valuable insights into the use of honorifics in Balinese and Japanese cultures, particularly within the context of intercultural marriage. The findings reveal that honorifics are deeply intertwined with cultural values, social hierarchy, and

interpersonal relationships. In Balinese society, honorific usage is shaped by traditional caste systems and modern social factors such as education, economic status, and position. Japanese honorifics, by contrast, are more context-dependent, reflecting situational dynamics and hierarchical relationships in both formal and informal settings.

Through dialogue analysis, this research has shown how intercultural couples navigate honorific systems by blending linguistic norms. Terms such as "Ajik," "Mok Jero," "Bli Gung," "Mang," and "Gung Aji" illustrate the Balinese emphasis on caste, kinship, and respect, while Japanese forms like "-san" and "-chan" highlight politeness and emotional closeness. These adaptive strategies foster mutual understanding and harmony within multicultural households, demonstrating the role of language in shaping respectful and cohesive family interactions.

However, this study is not without limitations. The data was drawn from a relatively small sample of dialogues within domestic settings, which may not fully capture the diversity of honorific usage in broader social contexts such as workplace, religious ceremonies, or public discourse. Additionally, the study focused primarily on spoken interactions, leaving written forms of honorifics unexplored.

Future research could expand on this work by examining honorific usage across different domains of communication, including digital platforms, institutional settings, and intergenerational discourse. Comparative studies involving other intercultural pairings, such as Balinese-Chinese or Japanese-Indonesian marriages, could also provide deeper insights into how honorifics evolve in multilingual and multicultural environments. Furthermore, longitudinal studies could explore how honorific usage changes over time within families, especially as children grow and linguistic identities shift.

In conclusion, understanding honorific systems is essential for fostering meaningful cross-cultural exchange. By recognizing the distinct yet complementary ways Balinese and Japanese speakers express respect and identity through language, researchers, educators, and intercultural communicators can enhance their awareness of social norms and improve their ability to navigate diverse linguistic landscapes. This study contributes to the broader discourse on language, society, and tradition, emphasizing the power of honorifics as markers of cultural belonging and interpersonal respect.

References

Andriyani, A. A. A. D., Ardiantari, I. A. P. G., Santika, I. D. A. D. M., & Nurita, W. (2022). Language Politeness Strategy in Japan-Bali Intermarriage among Balinese Family. *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 6(3), 134-141.

Ardiantari, I. A. P. G., Meidariani, N. W., & Satwika, I. G. A. A. S. (2024). The Language of Respect: Exploring the Dynamics of Honorifics in a Balinese-Japanese Marriage. In *Conference on English Language Teaching* (pp. 146-153).

Fauziati, E. (2013). Linguistic politeness theory. In *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Magister Pengkajian Bahasa UMS* (Vol. 4, pp. 88-108).

Ide, S. (1989). Formal Forms and Discernment: Two Neglected Aspects of Universals of Linguistic Politeness. *Multilingua*, 8(2-3), 223-248. <https://doi.org/10.1515/mult.1989.8.2-3.223>

Mayuko, H. (2015). "Bentuk Hormat" Dialek Bahasa Bali Aga Dalam Konteks Agama. *Jurnal Ilmiah Masyarakat Linguistik Indonesia*, 33(2), 121-133. <http://lingistik-indonesia.org/images/files/05>. Bentuk Hormat Dialek Bahasa Bali - Hara Mayuko (121-133) - 050416.pdf.

Purnomo, B. (2019). Aspects Of Javanese Nuanced Politeness When Serving Hotel Guests In YOGYAKARTA. *Humanus: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu-ilmu Humaniora*, 18(2), 139-152.

Rahayu, E. T., & Hartati, H. (2020). Bentuk dan Sistem Pengungkap Tingkat Tutur Bahasa Jepang. *PROLITERA: Jurnal penelitian pendidikan, bahasa, sastra, dan budaya*, 3(2), 131-138.

Rex-Horoi, F. (2023). Japanese Honorifics: An Easy Beginner's Guide. Japan: Team Japanese Corporation. <https://teamjapanese.com/japanese-honorifics>

Sartika, M. A. (2016). SAPAAN DALAM BAHASA MANGGARAI DI PROVINSI NUSA TENGGARA TIMUR. *Sintesis*, 10(2), 91-112. <https://doi.org/10.24071/sin.v10i2.920>

Sunarni, S., Patriantoro, P., & Seli, S. (2023). Kata Sapaan Dalam Bahasa Dayak Kanayatn: Kajian Sosiolinguistik. *Innovative: Journal Of Social Science Research*, 3(3), 6622-6636. <https://doi.org/10.31004/innovative.v3i3.1331>

Surya, M. A., Marnita, R., & Usman, F. (2022). HONORIFIK BAHASA JEPANG (KEIGO) DALAM SURAT ELEKTRONIK DI PERUSAHAAN JEPANG. *LINGUA: Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, dan Pengajarannya*, 19(1), 48-58. <https://doi.org/10.30957/lingua.v19i1.661>

Van Olmen, D., & Heinold, S. (2017). Imperatives and directive strategies from a functional-typological perspective: an introduction. In *Imperatives and directive strategies* (pp. 1-50). John Benjamins Publishing Company.