

## USE OF JAPANESE HONORIFIC EXPRESSIONS BY NATIVE CHINESE SPEAKERS

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The present study investigated the degree of acquisition of honorific expressions by native Chinese speakers with respect to both aspects of grammar and knowledge of Japanese personal relations. Thirty-two native Chinese speakers studying Japanese participated in this study. Sixty incorrect sentences containing honorific expressions (36 with exalted and 24 with humble terms) were used as stimulus items. Participants were required to correct the errors in the sentences. Scores for proper usage of honorific terms for others were higher than those for expressions requiring grammatical changes. Furthermore, scores for proper usage of honorific terms (both exalted and humble) pertaining to others were higher than those for proper usage of such terms pertaining to oneself/family members. The result of the analysis on scores pertaining to the proper reference to the object of politeness showed that native Chinese speakers had quite a lot of difficulty editing sentences requiring humble terms for the object of politeness in the third person.

**Key words:** the honorific expressions, native Chinese speakers, the second language acquisition

Honorific expressions vary from language to language. Languages that have systematic honorific expressions are, for example, Korean, Japanese, etc. Japanese is known to have such a wide variety of honorific expressions that it is almost impossible to have any type of conversation without the use of some of them (Nishida, 1987; Kikuchi, 1997). Previous studies were made not only from the viewpoint of the speaker (Kikuchi, 1997; Minami, 1987; Oishi, 1975; Tsujimura, 1967, etc.) but also from that of the listener (Miyaoaka, Tamaoka, & Ukida, 1999; Miyaoaka & Tamaoka, 2000).

Unlike the Japanese language, Chinese does not have a great variety of honorific expressions. Ho (1999) reported that modern Chinese had lost a majority of its honorific expressions by the middle of the twentieth century. Given this, it is assumed that younger Chinese students learning Japanese may encounter difficulties in mastering honorific expressions due to a lack of knowledge of such expressions in their own mother tongue.

Japanese honorific expressions are generally classified into three types: exalted, humble, and polite (Kikuchi, 1997; Minami, 1987; Oishi, 1975; Tsujimura, 1967). To illustrate this, we took as an example the non-honorific expression meaning 'The head of the department did me a favor by visiting the president at his home'

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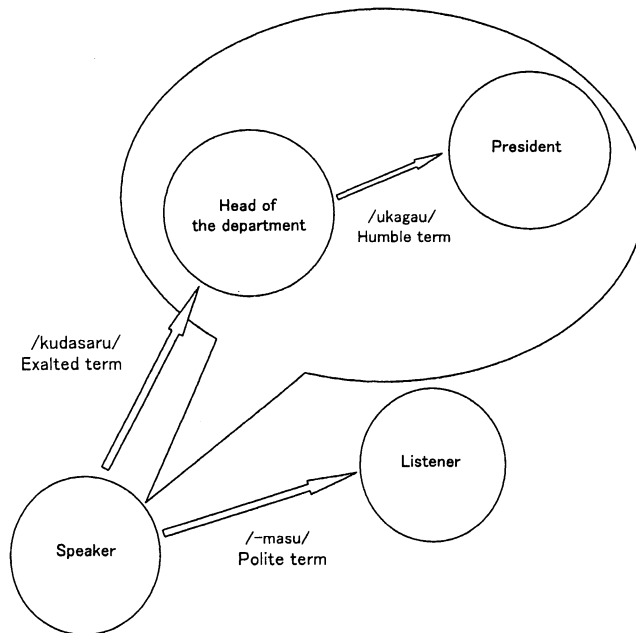


Fig. 1. Diagram of the honorific expression with exalted, humble and polite terms.

(*Buchoo<sup>1</sup>-ga watashi-no kawarini shachoo-no jitaku-o hoomonshite kureta*, 部長が私の代わりに社長の自宅を訪問してくれた) (see Fig. 1). This example was then modified to show respect to the listener without any consideration of respect towards either ‘the head of the department’ or ‘the president’ as in 部長が私の代わりに社長の自宅を訪問してくれました (*Buchoo-ga watashi-no kawarini shachoo-no jitaku-o hoomonshite kuremashita*). This sentence expresses respect to the listener by using an auxiliary verb as indicated by the underlined part of the sentence. In addition to being polite to the listener, when one wishes to express respect to the head of the department, the verb *くれる* (*kureru*) can be changed to the exalted verb *くださる* (*kudasaru*). The sentence would then become 部長が私の代わりに社長の自宅を訪問してくださいました。 (*Buchoo-ga watashi-no kawarini shachoo-no jitaku-o hoomonshite kudasai mashita*). Furthermore, as shown in Table 1, if one wishes to express respect to the president by lowering the status of the head of the department in the sentence, one could say 部長が私の代わりに社長の自宅へうかがってくださいました。 (*Buchoo-ga watashi-no kawarini shachoo-no jitaku-e ukagatte kudasai mashita*). In this way, *うかがう* (*ukagau*) is used as a humble term. The arrowheads in Fig. 1 represent politeness. Thus, the speaker shows respect directly to the listener by using the polite term *ます* (*masu*), and directly to the head of the department by using the exalted term *くださる* (*kudasaru*), while indirectly to the president in the sentence by humbling the head of the

<sup>1</sup> Japanese sentences are transcribed in the Hepburn style of romanization. However, this style cannot properly describe a long vowel, so that a vowel is repeated twice for a long vowel (e.g., ‘aa’, ‘ii’, ‘uu’, ‘ee’ and ‘oo’).

Table 1. Examples of Japanese Honorific Expressions

Non-honorific expression	部長が私の代わりに社長の自宅を訪問してくれた。 Buchoo-ga watashi-no kawarini shachoo-no jitaku-o hoomonshite kureta. The head of the department did me a favor by visiting the president at his home.
Honorific expression with polite terms	部長が私の代わりに社長の自宅を訪問してくれました。 Buchoo-ga watashi-no kawarini shachoo-no jitaku-o hoomonshite kuremashita. The head of the department did me a favor by visiting the president at his home.
Honorific expression with both exalted and polite terms	部長が私の代わりに社長の自宅を訪問して <u>ください</u> ました。 Buchoo-ga watashi-no kawarini shachoo-no jitaku-o hoomonshite kudasaimashita. The head of the department did me a favor by visiting the president at his home.
Honorific expression with exalted, humble and polite terms	部長が私の代わりに社長の自宅へ <u>伺って</u> <u>ください</u> ました。 Buchoo-ga watashi-no kawarini shachoo-no jitaku-e ukagatte kudasaimashita. The head of the department did me a favor by visiting the president at his home.

*Note:* Underlined parts in the sentences are honorific terms.

department with the humble term うかがう (*ukagau*). This type of sentence with honorific expressions is very complicated since these three types of modified honorific expressions are used in accordance with the relationship between the speaker, the listener and the people mentioned. This requires a good understanding of Japanese human relations.

Contrary to Chinese, where honorific expressions are formed by one's choice of words, Japanese not only requires a specific choice of words, but may also require that words undergo grammatical changes as well to produce honorific expressions. This difference is seen in the following example provided by Saji (1983). A Japanese standard sentence with a polite term meaning 'I will wait for you here' (ここであなたを待ちます, *Koko-de anata-o machi masu*) can be modified to form an honorific expression with a humble term (plus a polite term) as in ここであなたをお待ちします。(Koko-de anata-o omachi shimasu). The same standard expression in Chinese, 我在这里等你 (/wo zai zhe li deng ni/), can be modified to 我在这里等您 (/wo zai zhe li deng nin/), to form an equivalent of the Japanese honorific expression. This Chinese expression only altered its second person pronoun from 你 /ni/ to 您 /nin/. Japanese honorific expressions often require an additional auxiliary verb and/or replacement verb whereas Chinese can achieve the equivalent expression simply by altering a pronoun.

Ho (1999) reported that there was a dramatic decrease of honorific expressions in long novels written in Chinese from the nineteenth to the early twentieth century. Due to a lack of honorific expressions in Chinese, it is expected that Chinese learners of Japanese may experience difficulties in the acquisition of Japanese honorific expressions. Furthermore, Bu (1999) suggests that understanding Japanese human relations and the need for honorific expressions could be more difficult for native

Chinese speakers. Thus, the present study investigated the degree of acquisition of honorific expressions by young native Chinese speakers in terms of both their knowledge of Japanese grammar and of Japanese human relations.

## METHOD

### *Participants:*

Thirty-two undergraduate and graduate students, all native Chinese speakers studying Japanese, participated in this study. There were 17 females and 15 males. Average age of the 32 participants was 28 years and 1 month ranging from 17 years and 4 months to 39 years and 11 months. Korean Chinese who spoke the Korean language as a first language as well as the Chinese language were not included in this study. Thus, all participants in the study spoke Chinese as their first language. Average length of stay in Japan among participants was 2 years and 9 months ranging from 9 months to 8 years and 9 months. Average length of Japanese studies was 5 years and 4 months with a wide range of difference from 7 months to 18 years and 6 months. A Japanese ability test was given to all participants. This test consisted of 50 questions; 20 concerning particles, 20 concerning verbs, adjectives and the adjectival nominal and 10 concerning adverbs and adnominals. This test measured the participants' ability of Japanese grammar and vocabulary. The participants were asked to write one Hiragana in a blank '( )' within the stimulus items according to their own speed. It took about 15 minutes to complete on average. The maximum score of the test was 50 points. Average score on the Japanese ability test was 39.88 points ( $SD = 7.56$ ). As expected, participants' proficiency of Japanese was very high.

### *Stimulus items:*

As explained in the introduction of this paper, there are three different types of honorific expressions: exalted, humble and polite. The present study did not focus on polite terms since they are usually found in honorific expressions whether exalted or humbled. Sixty incorrect sentences, including honorific terms, were used for stimulus items — 36 with exalted terms and 24 with humble terms. Twenty correct sentences were also included as dummy items. Thus, participants were presented with 80 sentences at random on paper. Participants were required to correct the errors in the sentences.

The number of sentences was not equal with regards to those having exalted terms and those containing humble terms because exalted terms are found in a wider variety of honorific expressions than humble terms. Honorific expressions were made exalted by adding an exalted auxiliary verb of *—れる* *—られる* (*/-reru/* or */-rareru/*) or *お—になる* (*/o-ninaru/*), or by replacing existing verbs with honorific verbs such as *いらっしゃる* (*/irassharu/*) for *いる* (*/iru/*) meaning 'to be' and *召し上がる* (*/meshiagaru/*) for *食べる* (*/taberu/*) meaning 'to eat'. Honorific expressions were made humble by adding the humble auxiliary verb of *お—する* (*/o-suru/*) or by using humble verbs such as *申し上げる* (*/mooshiageru/*) for *言う* (*/iu/*) meaning 'to say/tell'.

### *Procedure:*

As explained, the number of stimulus items was 80. They include both correct and incorrect sentences. The stimulus items were indicated as underlined parts. Participants were asked to correct the stimulus items after identifying the incorrect items therein. In the case that they judge the items to be incorrect, they were required to correct the stimulus items. In the present study we adopt the method of error correction in order to ensure the reliability of the results. The participants were permitted to complete the task according to their own speed. In addition, all words used in these sentences were easily understood and frequently used, so all participants in the present study would not have any difficulty understanding them. People referred to in the sentences were the participant, the participant's father, Prof. Yamada and/or Prof. Sato. In the sentences, the participant talked to Prof. Yamada or to Prof. Sato, for whom honorific expressions were expected to have been used. On the other hand, when the subject in the sentence referred to his/her own father, honorific expressions were not expected to be used.

As shown in Table 2, sentences with exalted and humble terms were classified into three types according to the change required to make them correct: (1) grammatical changes, (2) honorific terms referring to oneself and family members, and (3) honorific terms referring to others. The first group was

Table 2. Examples of Incorrect Sentences in the Present Study

Category of incorrect usage	Object of politeness	Number of sentences	Listener	Examples of incorrect sentences
Grammatical changes made to produce exalted terms	2nd person	6	Prof. Yamada	山田先生、駅までタクシーにお乗られになりますか。 Yamada sensei, eki-made takushii-ni onorareninarimasu-ka. Mr. Yamada, will you go to the station by taxi ?
	3rd person	6	Prof. Sato	山田先生は、駅までお歩かれになります。 Yamada sensei-wa eki-made oarukareninarimasu. Mr. Yamada will walk to the station.
*Exalted terms used for oneself/ family members	1st person	6	Prof. Yamada	私は、昨日、3時間本をお読みにになりました。 Watashi-wa kinoo sanjikan hon-o oyomininarimashita. I read a book for three hours yesterday.
	3rd person	6	Prof. Yamada	私の父は、車を買うことをお決めになりました。 Watashi-no chichi-wa kuruma-o kau koto-o okimeninarimashita. My father decided to buy a car.
Exalted terms used for others	2nd person	6	Prof. Yamada	山田先生、今朝、コーヒーを飲みましたか。 Yamada sensei, kesa koohii-o nomimashita-ka. Mr. Yamada, did you drink coffee this morning?
	3rd person	6	Prof. Sato	その写真は、山田先生が撮りました。 Sono shashin-wa yamda sensei-ga torimashita. Mr. Yamada took that picture.
Grammatical changes made to produce humble terms	2nd person	4	Prof. Yamada	私は、昨日、山田先生からその本をいただき申しました。 Watashi-wa kinoo yamadasensei-kara sono hon-o itadakimooshimashita. I was given that book from Prof. Yamada yesterday.
	3rd person	4	Prof. Yamada	私の父は、佐藤先生から本をいただきました。 Watashi-no chichi-wa satoosensei-kara hon-o itadakaremashita. My father was given a book from Prof. Sato.
*Humble terms used for oneself/ family members	1st person	4	Prof. Yamada	山田先生は、昨日、私に電話をおかけしましたか。 Yamada sensei-wa kinoo watashi-ni denwa-o okakeshimashita-ka. Prof. Yamada, did you telephone me yesterday ?
	3rd person	4	Prof. Yamada	佐藤先生は、昨日、私の父に本をさしあげたそうです。 Satoo sensei-wa kinoo watashi-no chichi-ni hon-o sashiagetasoodesu. Prof. Sato gave a book to my father yesterday.
Humble terms used for others	2nd person	4	Prof. Yamada	昨日はおいしいケーキをもらいまして、ありがとうございました。 Kinoo-wa oishii keeki-o moraimashite arigatoozaimashita. Thank you for giving me such a delicious cake yesterday.
	3rd person	4	Prof. Yamada	私の父は、佐藤先生に手紙を出しました。 Watashi-no chichi-wa satoosensei-ni tegami-o dashimashita. My father sent a letter to Prof. Sato.
Total		60		

Note 1: Underlined parts in the sentences are incorrect.

Note 2: The category of exalted/humble terms used for oneself/family members marked by an ‘\*’ is never used in Japanese.

created to examine the acquisition of honorific expressions related to grammatical rules. The second group was created to examine the acquisition of the rule that honorific terms cannot be used for the first person in any case or for family members when one talks to others. The third group was used to examine the acquisition of appropriate usage of honorific terms in reference to others.

Furthermore, each of the groups consisted of two 'sub-groups' according to who the object of politeness was — the speaker/listener or the subject in the sentence. For example, the sentence meaning 'Prof. Yamada, will you go to the station by taxi?', (Yamada sensei, eki-made takushii-ni onorareninarimasu-ka, 山田先生、駅までタクシーにお乗られになりますか) shows the object of politeness as being the listener. In this same category, a sentence meaning 'Prof. Yamada will walk to the station', (Yamada sensei-wa eki-made oarukareninarimasu, 山田先生は、駅までお歩かれになります) shows the object of politeness as being the person (subject) in the sentence. These two types of sentences show correct understanding of human relations but are incorrect in their grammatical structure (underlined parts). In the category related to expressions concerning oneself and family members the sentence meaning 'I read a book for three hours yesterday', (Watashi-wa kinoo sanjikan hon-o oyomininarimashita, 私は、昨日、3時間本をお読みにになりました) shows the object of politeness as being the speaker of the sentence. The sentence meaning 'My father decided to buy a car', (Watashi-no chichi-wa kuruma-o kau koto-o okimeninarimashita, 私の父は、車を買うことをお決めになりました) has the object of politeness as being the person (subject) in the sentence. The underlined parts of these sentences are grammatically correct, however they are incorrect according to the rule that states that exalted expressions cannot be used to refer to the speaker or the speaker's family members. As for the category of expressions containing exalted terms referring to others, an example of the object of politeness being the listener is such as in the sentence meaning 'Prof. Yamada, did you have coffee this morning?', (Yamada sensei, kesa koohii-o nomimashita-ka, 山田先生、今朝、コーヒーを飲みましたか). An example of the object of politeness being the person in the sentence is such as in the sentence meaning 'That picture was taken by Prof. Yamada.', (Sono shashin-wa yamada sensei-ga torimasita, その写真は、山田先生が撮りました). These two types of sentences are inappropriate from the viewpoint of being polite, since the type of verbs chosen (underlined parts) are not exalted. In such situations, Prof. Yamada should be referred to by using exalted terms. Grammatically speaking, however, these sentences are correct. Incorrect sentences using humble terms were also created in the same way as shown in Table 2.

#### Materials and Scoring:

Scoring ranged from 0 to 2 points according to how well the stimulus items were corrected. When participants could correct the stimulus items perfectly, the highest score of 2 points was awarded. When the stimulus items were partially corrected, one point was given. Participants received the score of zero points when they were unable to identify or correct the incorrect items. We calculated only the incorrect items because the correct items all were dummy. Corrections of correct items were ignored. The means and standard deviations of the two types of honorific expressions with regards to understanding human relations are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations Matrix

Variables	Max. points	1	2	3	4	5
1 Length of Japanese studies	—	—				
2 Length of stay in Japan	—	0.43*	—			
3 Scores on the Japanese ability test	50	0.34	0.13	—		
4 Scores on the exalted terms test	68	0.28	0.07	0.53**	—	
5 Scores on the humble terms test	46	0.26	-0.06	0.74***	0.79***	—
<i>Means</i>		64 months	34 months	39.88	48.00	29.50
<i>Standard Deviations (SD)</i>		53 months	22 months	7.56	16.17	10.97

Note:  $n = 32$ . \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .0001$ .

## RESULTS

Pearson's correlation coefficients were calculated for the length of Japanese studies, the length of stay in Japan, the scores on the Japanese ability test, the scores on the exalted terms test and the scores on the humble terms test. The results are presented in Table 3.

## (1) Correlation Analysis

Among the participants tested in the present study, it is important to note that there was no significant correlation between the scores on the Japanese ability test and the length of one's stay in Japan ( $n = 32$ ,  $r = 0.13$ , *ns*). The results showed that one's length of stay in Japan has no bearing on one's Japanese ability. In addition, the scores on the Japanese ability test and the length of Japanese studies also did not show a significant correlation ( $n = 32$ ,  $r = 0.34$ , *ns*); however, they did not present a likelihood that those who study Japanese longer tend to be better in their Japanese language ability. On the other hand, there was a significant correlation between the scores on the Japanese ability test and the scores on the exalted terms test ( $n = 32$ ,  $r = 0.53$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and the humble terms test ( $n = 32$ ,  $r = 0.74$ ,  $p < .0001$ ). Similarly, there was a significant correlation between the scores on the exalted terms test and the scores on the humble terms test ( $n = 32$ ,  $r = 0.79$ ,  $p < .0001$ ). These results indicated that the higher one's ability of Japanese is, the higher one's knowledge is of the proper usage of exalted and humble terms. Other significant relationships were not found.

## (2) Analysis for Scores on the Exalted Terms (Sonkei-go) Test

The means of the scores for the exalted terms test are shown in Table 4. A  $3 \times 2$  analysis of variance (ANOVA) for repeated factors of error types (grammatical changes, honorific terms pertaining to oneself/family members and honorific terms used for others) and the object of politeness (the third person versus the first/second person) was performed on the scores of this test. The results indicated that there was a significant main effect for error types ( $F(2, 62) = 10.33$ ,  $MSe = 11.63$ ,  $p < .0001$ ). However, there was no significant main effect for the object of politeness ( $F(1, 31) = 3.03$ ,  $MSe = 2.75$ , *ns*). There was also no significant interaction between the error

Table 4. Mean Scores for the Exalted Terms Test

	1st/2nd person	3rd person
Grammatical changes	6.41 (3.82)	6.97 (4.03)
Exalted terms for oneself/family members	7.81 (3.60)	7.97 (4.19)
Exalted terms for others	9.16 (2.87)	9.69 (2.55)

Note 1: Maximum score is 12 points.

Note 2: Figures in parentheses are the standard deviations.

types and the object of politeness ( $F(2,62) = 0.25$ ,  $MSe = 3.24$ , *ns*). Therefore, in the learning of Japanese exalted terms, native Chinese speakers experienced difficulties in recognizing when there was a need for politeness, regardless of whether the object of politeness was the speaker/listener or someone referred to in the sentences.

In addition, since there was no main effect of the third person versus the first/second person, the results were closely examined with respect to the two variables of the third person and the first/second person together. This further analysis was conducted by orthogonal polynomial contrasts to examine differences of the three repeated conditions of error types. The results showed that scores for exalted terms relating to others had significant differences from scores for correcting either exalted terms for oneself/family members ( $F(1,31) = 5.72$ ,  $MSe = 52.51$ ,  $p < .05$ ) or grammatical changes ( $F(1,31) = 47.85$ ,  $MSe = 20.00$ ,  $p < .0001$ ). Interestingly enough, the scores for correcting honorific terms for others was higher than for correcting honorific expressions requiring grammatical changes. There was no significant difference between the scores for correcting expressions needing grammatical changes and those with honorific terms for oneself/family members ( $F(1,31) = 2.76$ ,  $MSe = 67.09$ , *ns*). That is to say, the degree of acquisition is similar between the two variances.

### (3) Analysis for Scores on the Humble Terms (Kenjoo-go) Test

The means of the scores for the humble terms test are shown in Table 5. In a similar way as done in the analysis for the exalted terms test, a  $3 \times 2$  ANOVA for repeated factors of error types (grammatical changes, honorific terms for oneself/family members and honorific terms for others) and of the object of politeness (the speaker/listener versus the persons referred to in the sentence) was performed on the scores of the humble terms test.

Results indicated that there was a significant main effect for the error types ( $F(2,62) = 24.81$ ,  $Mse = 3.56$ ,  $p < .0001$ ) and the object of politeness ( $F(1,31) = 46.96$ ,  $Mse = 2.11$ ,  $p < .0001$ ). The interaction between the error types and the object of politeness was also significant ( $F(2,62) = 6.48$ ,  $Mse = 1.42$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The further analysis was conducted by orthogonal polynomial contrasts to examine differences of the three repeated conditions of error types. Scores for correcting humble terms relating to others showed a significant difference from scores for

Table 5. Mean Scores for the Humble Terms Test

	1st/2nd person	3rd person
Grammatical changes	4.78 (2.74)	4.16 (2.34)
Humble terms for oneself/family members	4.81 (2.67)	3.25 (2.53)
Humble terms for others	7.31 (1.20)	5.19 (2.04)

Note 1: Maximum score is 8 points.

Note 2: Figures in parentheses are the standard deviations.



correcting either humble terms used for oneself/family members ( $F(1,31) = 40.88$ ,  $Mse = 15.42$ ,  $p < .0001$ ) or expressions requiring grammatical changes ( $F(1,31) = 35.18$ ,  $Mse = 11.54$ ,  $p < .0001$ ). There was no significant difference between the sentences needing grammatical changes and the humble terms for oneself/family members ( $F(1,31) = 1.55$ ,  $Mse = 15.79$ , *ns*). Thus, the scores regarding these two factors were similar to the scores of the exalted expressions.

In addition, in order to compare scores related to the object of politeness in the sentences of the humble terms test, a one-way ANOVA for repeated measures was conducted. The results showed significant differences for grammatical changes ( $F(1,31) = 4.53$ ,  $Mse = 1.38$ ,  $p < .05$ ), for humble terms for oneself/family members ( $F(1,31) = 20.90$ ,  $Mse = 1.87$ ,  $p < .0001$ ), and for humble terms for others ( $F(1,31) = 42.46$ ,  $Mse = 1.70$ ,  $p < .0001$ ) when concerning the object of politeness. Therefore, for all these sentence types, scores for sentences where the object of politeness was the person referred to in the sentence were lower than those for sentences where the object of politeness was the speaker/listener. In other words, when the object of politeness is someone being referred to, humble terms are more difficult to master. This is because the use of humble terms and understanding of Japanese human relations is especially difficult when the object of politeness is someone being referred to in the sentence. On the other hand, with regards to the usage of exalted terms, there were no significant differences when the object of politeness was either the speaker/listener or someone being referred to.

#### (4) Analysis of Scores for Grammatical Inflections and Expressional Differences

As mentioned earlier in this paper, scores for grammatical changes were significantly lower than scores for both exalted and humble terms relating to others. Therefore, further investigation focusing on verb inflections (or verb conjugations) and expressional differences was conducted to examine what kind of honorific terms, used incorrectly in sentences, are difficult to find and correct.

In the present study, the category of honorific terms was created by using inflectional verbs of two types, *godan* and *ichidan*. The Japanese verbs are classified into three groups by their inflectional or conjugational types; *godan*, *ichidan* and irregular verbs. *Godan* and *ichidan* verbs are sometimes called the first group verb and the second group verb respectively. Basically, these verbs are distinguished by their dictionary form (or basic form): *Godan* ends with /-u/ while *ichidan* ends with /-ru/. The stem of *godan* verbs inflect in five vowels; /-a/, /-i/, /-u/, /-e/, /-o/. On the other hand, the stem of *ichidan* verbs does not change. Furthermore, verbs were considered to be types of honorific terms with expressional differences from each other. Since both exalted and humble terms have both types of verbs, difficulties of both types were examined.

Combining with verbs of *godan* and *ichidan*, a verb was considered to be exalted if: (1) it used /-reru, -rareru/ as its auxiliary verb, (2) it used /o-ninaru/ as its auxiliary verb, or (3) it was considered, itself, to be an exalted verb such as /irassharu/ in place of /iru/. Means and standard deviations for the scores related to exalted verb

Table 6. Mean Scores for Each Inflectional Type of Exalted Terms

	Godan conjugation			Ichidan conjugation		
	/-reru, -rareru/	/o-ninaru/	exalted verbs	/-reru, -rareru/	/o-ninaru/	exalted verbs
Listener	1.38 (0.94)	1.13 (1.01)	0.88 (1.01)	1.72 (0.68)	0.94 (1.01)	0.38 (0.79)
Person referred to in the sentence	1.13 (0.98)	1.19 (0.97)	1.06 (1.01)	1.28 (0.96)	1.00 (0.95)	1.31 (0.90)

Note 1: Maximum score is 2 points.

Note 2: Figures in parentheses are the standard deviations.

inflection and expressional differences are shown in Table 6. A verb was considered to be humble if: (1) it used /o-suru/ as its auxiliary verb or (2) it was already considered to be humble such as /ukagau/ in place of /hoomon suru/ meaning 'to visit'. In the humble terms, only two classifications exist. The means and standard deviations are shown in Table 7. The following are the results of analyses for exalted and humble terms.

#### Exalted Terms

A  $2 \times 3$  ANOVA for repeated factors concerning the two types of verb inflection (*godan* and *ichidan*) and the three types of expressional differences (/reru, -rareru/, /o-ninaru/ and exalted verbs) was conducted where emphasis was on whether the object of politeness was the listener or the person referred to in the sentence. Results concerning the object of politeness as the listener indicated that there was no significant main effect of verb inflection ( $F(1,31) = 0.97$ ,  $MSe = 0.65$ , *ns*) while there was a significant main effect of expressional differences ( $F(2,62) = 25.66$ ,  $MSe = 0.53$ ,  $p < .0001$ ). There was significant interaction between these two factors of expressional differences and verb inflections ( $F(2,62) = 6.48$ ,  $MSe = 0.45$ ,  $p < .01$ ). These results were closely examined with respect to the two variables in each condition of expressional differences using orthogonal polynomial contrasts. The results showed that there was a significant difference between /reru, -rareru/ and /o-ninaru/ ( $F(1,31) = 11.60$ ,  $MSe = 2.93$ ,  $p < .01$ ), between /o-ninaru/ and exalted verbs ( $F(1,31) = 16.85$ ,  $MSe = 1.25$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and between /reru, -rareru/ and exalted verbs ( $F(1,31) = 49.43$ ,  $MSe = 2.20$ ,  $p < .0001$ ). Therefore, as shown in the mean scores in Table 6, of the three ways to form exalted expressions, native Chinese speakers found using /reru, -rareru/ to be the easiest and the replacement of verbs with their exalted counterparts such as /meshiagaru/ for /taberu/ as the most difficult.

Results of the analysis concerning the object of politeness as being the person referred to in the sentence showed that there was no significant main effect of verb inflection ( $F(1,31) = 0.35$ ,  $MSe = 0.73$ , *ns*) and expressional differences ( $F(2,62) = 0.38$ ,  $MSe = 0.58$ , *ns*). The interaction between verb inflection and expressional differences ( $F(2,62) = 1.82$ ,  $MSe = 47$ , *ns*) was also insignificant. Therefore, when the object of politeness is the person referred to in the sentence, the exalted terms formed by inflectional conditions (/reru, -rareru/, /o-ninaru/) or by the replacement

Table 7. Mean Scores for Each Inflectional Type of Humble Terms

	Godan conjugation		Ichidan conjugation	
	/o-suru/	humble verbs	/o-suru/	humble verbs
Listener	1.25 (0.92)	1.38 (0.94)	1.13 (0.98)	1.03 (1.00)
Person referred to in the sentence	0.78 (0.97)	1.78 (0.61)	0.72 (0.89)	0.88 (1.01)

Note 1: Maximum score is 2 points.

Note 2: Figures in parentheses are the standard deviations.

of exalted verbs are equally difficult to form in both conjugational categories of *godan* and *ichidan* verbs.

### Humble Terms

A  $2 \times 2$  ANOVA for repeated factors concerning verb inflection (*godan* and *ichidan*) and expressional differences (/o-suru/ as the exalted auxiliary verb, and humble verb) was conducted where the focus was on the object of politeness being either the listener or the person mentioned in the sentence.

As for when the object of politeness is the listener, the results indicated that there was a significant main effect of verb inflection ( $F(1,31) = 4.36$ ,  $MSe = 0.40$ ,  $p < .05$ ), while there was no significant main effect of expressional differences ( $F(1,31) = 0.01$ ,  $MSe = 0.65$ , *ns*). In comparison with the means of scores for *godan* inflectional verbs, the means of scores for *ichidan* inflectional verbs were lower. As far as the verb inflections of the humble terms in the present study are concerned, *ichidan* inflectional verbs were more difficult to master than *godan* inflectional verbs. The interaction between these two factors of expressional differences and verb inflection was not significant ( $F(1,31) = 0.52$ ,  $MSe = 0.74$ , *ns*).

The results of the analysis when the object of politeness was the person referred to in the sentence showed significant differences between *godan* and *ichidan* conjugations ( $F(1,31) = 10.01$ ,  $MSe = 0.75$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and between /o-suru/ and honorific verbs ( $F(1,31) = 22.02$ ,  $MSe = 0.49$ ,  $p < .0001$ ). The interaction between expressional differences and verb inflection ( $F(1,31) = 11.00$ ,  $MSe = 0.52$ ,  $p < .01$ ) was also significant. In short, the present analyses suggest that the easiest way to form a humble expression is when the object of politeness is the person referred to in the sentence and where a humble verb of *godan* conjugation (inflection) must be used; the most difficult humble expressions to form are those requiring *ichidan* inflectional verbs using /o-suru/.

### DISCUSSION

The present study investigated the degree of acquisition of honorific expressions by native Chinese speakers concerning both aspects of grammar and knowledge of Japanese personal relations. A previous study (Bu, 1999) suggested that a lack of

understanding of Japanese personal relations makes it more difficult for native Chinese speakers to acquire Japanese honorific expressions. To further this notion, the present study investigated how well native Chinese speakers understand Japanese personal relations by two measures: their knowledge of proper usage of exalted/humble terms for oneself and family members, and their knowledge of proper usage of exalted/humble terms for others. Furthermore, the previous study compared these two measures concerning Japanese personal relations with grammatical changes.

The assumption was that the proper usage of honorific expressions requiring grammatical changes is easier to master than the selection of honorific terms (both exalted and humble) used for others. However, in the present study, the scores for proper usage of honorific terms for others were higher than those for expressions requiring grammatical changes. This result suggests that grammatical changes such as verb inflection to make honorific verbs were not completely acquired by participants. This could be due to the fact that native Chinese speakers have some difficulties in adding auxiliary verbs to existing verbs or in verb inflection, since they usually express politeness in their own language by way of simply altering a personal pronoun, indirect expressions, etc. From another point of view the selection of honorific terms (both exalted and humble) concerning the understanding of human relations is easier than the grammatical change. On the contrary, the previous study (Hirabayashi & Hama, 1988) suggested that the selection of honorific terms is more difficult than the grammatical change. This would indicate that the basic concept of politeness is more difficult to learn than the grammar. In other words the lack of the honorific system of mother tongue influences the second language acquisition. But on the other hand, Seliger (1998) proved that the errors produced by learners had almost nothing to do with the mother tongue by referring to the study of Dulay & Burt (1974) and that of Bailey, Madden & Krashen (1974). In the present study, the basic concept of the use of honorific expression is easier than the grammatical change. This result would support the Seliger's suggestion.

In addition, scores for proper usage of honorific terms (both exalted and humble) pertaining to others were higher than those for proper usage of such terms pertaining to oneself/family members. In Japanese, it is a fundamental rule of honorific expressions that one cannot use honorific expressions concerning his/her family members to someone outside the family circle. The result of the present study shows that the mastering of this rule is more difficult than the rule regarding proper usage of exalted/humble terms for others. This could be due to the fact that native Chinese speakers are not as conscious of the distinctions between internal and external interactions that exist in Japanese.

From the analysis regarding the object of politeness, participants seem to have the same degree of acquisition concerning exalted terms used for the first/second person and those used for the third person. On the other hand, as for the humble terms, when the object of politeness was in the third person, scores were lower than when the object of the politeness was in the first/second person. In the instances where humble

terms were used for the object of politeness in the third person, the persons in the sentence were four; however, in all other occasions the persons in the sentence were three: the speaker, the listener, and the person referred to in the sentence. In other words, the complexity of Japanese human relations made it quite difficult for native Chinese speakers of the present study to edit sentences requiring humble terms for the object of politeness in the third person.

Furthermore, an analysis regarding the inflectional type of exalted/humble verbs and the type of honorific expressions was conducted to investigate the difficulties Chinese have when making grammatical changes. From the analysis of the inflectional type of exalted/humble verbs, it seems when the speaker uses humble terms both for the listener and for the person referred to in the sentence, the scores for *godan* conjugational verbs are higher than those for *ichidan* conjugational verbs. From the analysis of different types of honorific expressions, the highest score was related to the exalted expressions using /-reru, -rareru/; the second was related to expressions using /o-ninaru/; the lowest was scores related to the usage of exalted verbs. On the other hand, when comparing humble expressions, scores for humble terms were higher than those for the humble verbs formed by using /o-suru/. This result could be explained due to the similar way that both exalted and humble verbs are formed using /o-ninaru/ and /o-suru/, respectively, and because the exalted expression of /o-ninaru/ is used more often than the humble expression of /o-suru/.

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(Manuscript received October 27, 2000; Revision accepted August 13, 2001)