

Yuko Taniguchi: Affect and the EFL classroom: Language contact in addressing  
in: Bent Preisler, Anne Fabricius, Hartmut Haberland, Susanne Kjærbeck, and Karen Risager eds.  
The Consequences of Mobility  
Roskilde: Roskilde University, Department of Language and Culture  
80-92  
ISBN: 87-7349-651-0  
<http://www.ruc.dk/isok/skriftserier/mobility/>  
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# Affect and the EFL Classroom: Language Contact in Addressing

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## Abstract

This study investigates affect or affective elements between the teacher and students in EFL classroom interaction. Affect is regarded as a linguistically significant phenomenon in interactions, which are analysed contextually. The focus is on addressing students, (who are native speakers of Japanese), by teachers (native speakers of English). This verbal act in EFL classroom designates students' names that come from their native language and it indicates parts of their self-identities. Therefore, affect in this study is formulated particularly in interaction where contact between the students' native language and the teacher's native language occurs. The results of this study show that affect is produced along with different teachers' orientations towards teaching and the student's reaction to it. Particularly, affect operates negatively, when the context of addressing is perceived negatively. This study reveals that affect is tangible in cross-cultural encounters and plays a significant role in human interaction.

## Introduction

Human beings are emotional creatures: It is obvious that we feel something while we use language in interaction with others (cf. Finegan 1999). Interactions in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom involve various types of human communications. It would, therefore, be natural to imagine that such emotional aspects of interactions can be observed in the EFL classroom. One example: A student came late to an EFL classroom, while a teacher was introducing 'the topic of the day' to other students. Having been interrupted, however, the teacher stopped talking to the class and said to the particular student emphatically '*Takeshi*' (in which 'ke' of Takeshi was strongly pronounced), and then 'Good morning.' The student sat down at his seat quietly and felt embarrassed because the teacher's way of pronouncing his name sounded negative to him.

The EFL classroom is generally considered as a setting where teaching and learning EFL is conducted. English is introduced through content; it can also be used as a language of the classroom. Teachers interact with students verbally or nonverbally for different purposes in the classroom. Meanwhile, the student's native language always exists in the classroom, whether it is linguistically apparent or not. This is because students are human beings who are competent in their own native language. In other words, the EFL classroom is a setting that provides contact between the students' language and target language. Teachers and students experience such contact between the languages used in the classroom. Due to this linguistic contact, both the teachers and the students experience certain feelings particularly produced in the classroom.

In this study, therefore, I will pay a special attention to emotional aspects of the language used in the EFL classroom arising through contact between the target language and students' native language. This study will examine affect produced through contact between the target language and students' native language, through focus on teachers' use of address forms (i.e. students' given names). The affect examined is instantiated by this very type of interaction in EFL classroom. In this study, I will analyse affect by looking specifically at stress placement on the students' names in teachers' pronunciation of their names.

## **Previous studies**

### *Studies on affect*

People's feelings induced alongside their production of speech have primarily been discussed in disciplines other than linguistics, such as psychology. However, there are some linguists who have considered affect as emotional force produced by language used at interaction. One example is Ochs and Schieffelin (1989) who comprehensively listed linguistic research on affect. They categorise various previous studies related to affect into four groups, which include Jakobson (1969), Halliday (1975), Bakhtin (1981) and Labov (1984). It should be also noted that scholars in the discipline of pragmatics have also been aware of importance of affect in language use for a long time (cf. Searle 1965, Brown and Levinson 1987, Verschueren 2001).

Affect as discussed in this study is something that is produced not by using expressions of emotions. Rather, it refers to one's state of emotion produced with the language use in interaction. Therefore, this study does not deal with feeling or emotion that certain expressions describe directly, which is explored through a cognitive view of language in past decades (Wierzbicka 1992, Lakoff and Kövecses 1987).

### *Studies on foreign language teaching and learning*

In studies in TEFL, the researchers' attention to the phenomenon of the contact between the target language and students' native language in EFL classroom dates back to the era of contrastive analysis. However, contrastive analysis looks at syntactic structure between the languages in order to predict (see Lado 1957) or at least explain (see Wardhaugh 1970) learners' difficulties in learning the linguistic system of the target language (Brown 1994). This is only one aspect of analysing a phenomenon of language contact. Studies on cross-cultural pragmatics were conducted extensively in late 80s and 90s (cf. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1984, Beebe and Takahashi 1989). Most of these studies singled out a smaller unit, (i.e. speech act such as apology and request) in order to compare these pragmatics aspects (similarity or difference) between the two languages. The scholars in these studies attempted to find out the ways to overcome possible difficulties that learners (and teachers) might face in pragmatics aspects of both the target language and the learner's native language. It is also possible to say that a certain affective aspect is implicitly discussed in cross-cultural pragmatics studies, since pragmatic difference or similarity between the two languages may cause certain feeling in learners (Taniguchi 1994, 1996). The contact between languages will include various aspects of language which are interwoven in a complex way (cf. Widdowson 1996). Affect produced between a teacher and students due to contact between the target language and students' native language has not received much attention.

In addition, affective aspects in studies on foreign language teaching and learning have been widely discussed, but these have mainly been explored from psychological perspectives (e.g. McDonough 1986, Horwitz et al 1986, MacIntyre & Gardner 1991). Affect produced by language use has not

received much attention in those studies. In this respect, this study is worthwhile, as it investigates affect or emotional force from perspectives of language use: affect is discussed as a consequence of the linguistic contact in EFL classroom.

#### *Studies of address form and their relevance to this study*

In order to investigate affect in the EFL classroom produced by language use, this study focuses on use of address forms. I will particularly look at native English teachers' use of students' names (in Japanese). There are several reasons for the focus on address forms. Address forms (i.e. names) are used to identify individuals: they also reflect social relationships with others (Leech 1989). Moreover, address form use reflects self and/or social identity (Jernudd 1994): This is because people's own names are often derived from their native language and culture. Use of address forms (names) is directly related to those individuals who are interacting with each other; therefore, use of a certain address form is related to affective aspects existing between addressers and addressees, such as feelings of closeness and/or feelings of distance (cf. Braun 1989, Maynard 2002).

Address form use in this study is analysed particularly by looking at features of stress placement. Analysing stress placement has not much received attention among address form studies. This is because address form use has been traditionally studied as lexical selection, in order to investigate meaning in contexts (Brown and Gilman 1960 for discussion of power and solidarity, and also see Braun 1988, Oyetade, 1995). However, this study analyses stress placement to reveal affect realized as signals of interpretively significant aspect of the given context. In other words, this study examines affect at pragmatic level. As in the example of the student being late for the class presented above, suprasegmental features of language including the variation of stress placement on names would affect one's emotional reaction to the addresser. Looking at stress placement of address form use may therefore reveal a more concrete evidence of producing affect in the interaction at face-to-face.

This study will particularly analyse stress placement on address forms (i.e. names of students) by native English teachers. Thus, this study looks at contact between English and students' native language (Japanese), as students' names which are derived from their native language. In other words, affect due to contact between the languages is discussed by focusing on stress placement on address forms (names).

#### *Approach to the Analysis*

I analyse affect by looking at phonological features of the teacher's addressing to students' names: The analysis of the data is thus conducted at the pragmatic level. I particularly focus on whether or not English stress rules are applied in the students' Japanese names pronounced by the English speaker teachers.

In this study, students' names are derived from Japanese. This is a language which is characterised by syllable-timed rhythm: Each syllable in a word mostly has equal duration (Kubozono 1999, Enomoto 2001). Thus, it is impossible to place stress in a word that is accompanied with an increase of length of the syllable. On the other hand, English – in this case the language of the classroom and the native language of the teachers – is characterised by stress-timed rhythm. This means that a syllable in a word is pronounced with stress, and is prominent in terms of length as well as pitch and loudness.

The phonological difference between English and Japanese is explained by a notion of 'phonotactics'. It is based on an idea that each language has certain constraints to characterise its



many Japanese students and showed her understanding of certain cultural aspects of Japanese throughout her teaching career.

Among the students taught by these teachers, I particularly focus on the cases of two students: Subject 1 (whose name is Makiko) out of the nine students in John’s lesson and Subject 2 (whose name is Naomi) out of ten in Karen’s lesson. Both students contributed to the lessons well at the time of the observations. In the interviews with the teachers, both teachers said that those students’ classroom performances were very reliable compared with the others. Subject 1 (Makiko) also said in the interview that she answered the questions by the teacher voluntarily because she wanted to move the lesson more quickly. Subject 2 (Naomi) commented during the interview that she was very interested in Karen’s lessons since materials that Karen brought to the lesson were very useful for her learning.

*Context of addressing and stress placement*

This study examines affect produced by the teachers’ use of their students’ names in the EFL classroom, where the contact occurs between the target language, English and the students’ native language, Japanese. In order to single out affect or affective forces carried by the addressing, I will first examine contexts where the particular addressing occurs between the teachers and the students. This examination is particularly conducted by looking at phases of the lessons where the teachers interacted with each of the students and at the same time the teacher needed to manage the whole group of the students. In other words, I will focus on ‘public’ aspects of classroom interaction and exclude phases of individual work or work in pairs/groups, which are conducted rather privately in terms of teaching.

In this study, I focus particularly on the first 50 minute segments out of the 90 minutes’ John’s lesson, excluding 5 minute pair work: I also focus on a total of 40 minute segments out of the two hours’ of Karen’s lesson, excluding individual work or pair/group work. The result is shown in Table 1. As this table shows, addressing by both of the teachers occurs in seven different contexts: They are ‘elicitation for the teacher’s expected response’, ‘elicitation for confirmation’, ‘asking for co-operation’, ‘calling for attention’, ‘encouragement for completing a response’, ‘giving a direction’ and ‘warning’. In other words, affect will be produced from these contexts.

Table 1: Contexts of addressing to Makiko and Naomi

	John’s addressing to Makiko (11)	Karen’s addressing to Naomi (7)
Elicitation for the teacher’s expected response	2	5
Elicitation for confirmation	1	
Asking for co-operation		1
Calling for attention	1	
Encouragement for completing a response	2	
Giving a direction	2	1
Warning	3	

Both of the teachers showed different variations of stress placed on students’ names (i.e. Makiko and Naomi). Stress placed by following phonological rules in English (stress is placed on the next to the last syllable) occurs only twice. As illustrated in Table 2, one occurs in a context of

‘elicitation for the teacher’s expected response’ by Karen, while the other occurs in the context ‘warning’ by John.

Karen addressed Subject 2 (Naomi) a total of seven times during the segments of her teaching. The stress placed on the next to the last (penultimate) syllable of Naomi [næ.O.mi] occurred only once during the segments: This stress placement was not observed in any contexts during the period of the lesson. In other words, this particular addressing was significant, as the teacher was back to using English to the student.

Table 2 Variations of stress placement according to contexts of addressing<sup>1</sup>

	John’s addressing Makiko (11)	Karen’s addressing Naomi (7)
Elicitation for the teacher’s expected response	ma.ki.ko (2)	næ.o.mi (2) Næ.o.mi (2) næ.O.mi (1)* <sup>2</sup>
Elicitation for confirmation	ma.ki.ko (1)	
Asking for co-operation		næ.O.mi (1)*
Calling for attention	ma.ki.ko (1)	
Encouragement for completing a response	ma.ki.ko (2)	
Giving a direction	ma.ki.ko (2)	Næ.o.mi (1)
Warning	ma.ki.ko (2) ma.KI.ko (1)*	

Karen also addressed Naomi by placing stress on the third syllable from the last (i.e., [Næ. o. mi]) in the context of ‘elicitation for the teacher’s expected response’: This occurs twice. In these examples, stress is not placed where stress is supposed to be placed according to the English phonological rules (i.e., the next to last syllable). These examples, however, are not considered a reflection of the English phonological rules, even though stress is placed on her name in this addressing.

Moreover, according to a Japanese accent rule, accentuation occurs on [Næ] – the third syllable from the last (Enomoto 2001): The pitch drops suddenly right after that syllable. Thus, if stress is placed on the [Næ] of Naomi the interpretation will be that the teacher intends to pronounce it to sound Japanese (See Figure 2).

It should be also noted that I interviewed Karen after the observation. She said that pronouncing the name of Naomi was easy, compared to using other students’ names in her lesson, such as Yukiyo. This is because Naomi also exists as a British name, though its pronunciation of [næ] of Naomi is not exactly the same. Thus, the teacher was likely to feel comfortable with pronouncing this Japanese student’s name, Naomi.

<sup>1</sup> Analysis of stress placement has been conducted with no reference to noise-reduction.

<sup>2</sup> \* indicates that stress placement reflects English phonotactics.





10. Naomi: I think so.  
 11. Karen: Yes, in fact in your picture, that's what we had, [ˈwʌzn't it]. Yes,  
 12. Naomi: [ʌnnn.]

Before addressing Naomi (which is turn 9), Karen asks Kana about difference between a pillow and a cushion (which is turn 1). This is because Karen overheard Kana having difficulty in describing the difference between those two words during the pair work. At the same time, Karen also knows that Naomi has a picture showing not only a pillow but also cushions which were placed on the bed. Therefore, Naomi must know the difference from her picture. Subsequently, Karen asked Naomi to answer the question, and this use of *Naomi* [Næ.o.mi] must occur at 'eliciting the teacher's expected response' from her.

#### Example 3: Subject 2, Naomi

*(This segment takes place about 45 minutes after the beginning of the lesson. The teacher (Karen) is operating with true-or-false questions. She has first shown a picture card to each of the students and then read six statements related to the pictures. The students write down True or False according to whether the sentences are matched with the picture card or not. Then, Karen asks the students about what the statements she read are and whether they are true or not. After checking the first set of the questions, the Karen is now going to ask Naomi about the second set of the questions.)*

1. Karen: Oh. Very good. Yes. yes. ...*(laughing)*. Excellent..... Very observant. Do you remember the second sentence, *Naomi* [næ.o.mi]  
 2. Naomi: *Ee...to* ('well'). There are are, *Ee* ('un')?... The the lamp above the table was white. That is white.  
 3. Karen: Uh-hum. Good  
 4. Naomi: And it's false.

Example 3 shows that Karen nominates Naomi for answering the questions. It is the second set of questions in this activity. The student who was nominated to answer the first set of the questions had showed a lack of confidence while responding to the teacher, despite the fact that the questions were easy. Thus, the teacher nominated a more reliable student for the next set of the questions. Since Naomi is one of the students who contributes to the lesson consistently, Karen is likely to expect a correct response from Naomi at the time of addressing her. Therefore, this use of addressing Naomi must occur at eliciting the teacher's expected response.

#### Example 4: Subject 2, Naomi

*(This is at the end of the lesson. Karen has asked the students to get in a pair and talk about their own favourite rooms at home. Then she is going to ask four students to talk about their partners' favourite room in class. After Aki, Karen is going to ask Naomi to talk about this.)*

1. Karen: And Aki what about Chiaki. What is her favourite room.  
*(Aki starts talking about it and the teacher is saying to Naomi.)*  
 2. Karen: And Naomi [næ.O.mi], what was Mai's favourite room and why?  
*(Naomi is talking about it and the lesson is over.)*

Example 4 occurs at the end of the lesson. Karen asks four of the students to talk about their partner's favourite room. This is a follow-up activity for the previous pair work. At the follow-up phase, Naomi is the last student whom Karen asked a question. The other three students who have been nominated for this activity have also finished their talk without much difficulty. Hence, we can assume that this task is not difficult for Naomi either. Since Naomi has always contributed to

her lessons, Karen's use of addressing Naomi here occurs at 'elicitation for her expected response'. This time, the teacher puts stress on the second syllable of her name, which follows English phonological rules.

These three examples from Karen's lesson also show addressing of 'elicitation for the teacher's expected response'. Unlike the cases of John's addressing to *Makiko* discussed earlier, Karen happens to pronounce the student's name in a way that English phonological rules are reflected at addressing of 'elicitation for the teacher's expected response'. It occurs at the time of addressing to the student who follows and contributes to the lesson well. Since the student's name is derived from Japanese, it is supposed to (or at least one should attempt to) be pronounced in the way it is pronounced in Japanese, in order to appear polite to the students. Therefore, we can see that this stress placement (reflecting English phonological rules in Example 4) occurs when Karen is not likely to be relaxed while addressing to the student. This was most significant when she was under the pressure of finishing up the lesson of the day.

It should be also noted that Karen commented on this in the interview: She admitted that she felt time pressure at the time of addressing her. She also said that this was because this addressing occurred in the last phase of the lesson, in which she was following-up the previous pair-work. If she had not completed the follow-up oral presentation, the previous pair-work would have been meaningless in term of her teaching agenda. Thus, she said she rushed to finish the following-up activity.

There are other interesting findings from the interview with the students. I have asked the seven students including Naomi about their feeling toward Karen's use of addressing their names. Their responses were all the same. They were not able to distinguish the variation in stress placement of their names that the teacher pronounced. Naomi did not even realize that a part of her name Na [na] had constantly pronounced as [næ], which sound does not belong to Japanese. None of the students had a particular feeling towards the teacher's different stress placement on their names.

On the other hand, I interviewed Makiko from John's class. She said that she was aware that the teacher sometimes pronounced her name with stress. Throughout the lessons that I video-recorded, John's stress placed on Makiko's name occurred only once. The addressing occurred in the context of warning to Makiko as Example 5 shows.

Example 5: Subject 1, Makiko

*(All the students stand up and do pair work. Then, they sit down, and the teacher (John) is giving another direction for the class activity to the students.)*

1. John: OK. Can you now write... your own conversation? Please write... *(briefly pointing at the board in which he had written 'A, B, A' vertically to indicate a role of a speaker in the conversation)* your own conversation *(then looking at Kayoko and Makiko)* Kayoko, Makiko [ma.KI.ko]. Can you write *(pointing at the board)* your own conversation .... OK?

When we look at the use of *Makiko* in Example 5, it appears as if the use is a part of John giving the students a direction for the next activity in the classroom. However, its pragmatic meaning can be interpreted as 'The teacher is asking you to pay attention to the activity he is explaining'. Makiko is chattering with Kayoko again, and John is addressing her as *Makiko* in order to interrupt them. This address form, *Makiko* [ma.KI.ko] is used to make her stop chattering and pay attention to the lesson. Thus, this use of *Makiko* occurs in the context of warning. This use is considered more

‘personal’ as it is not related to the class activity itself. This time, John places stress on the second syllable from the last on *Makiko* [ma. KI. ko]. This stress placement shows that he follows the English stress rule, the one of the teacher’s native language.

What we should consider in relation to this example is that it occurs when the warning for the same student was issued for the third time for the same reason – the student was chattering with the one sitting next to her. This stress shift can be contextually interpreted as ‘This is it, Makiko. It’s enough. I am very displeased with your behavior in the classroom. Stop chattering right now and concentrate on the lesson’. This stress shift shows John’s unpleasant feeling toward her misbehavior at a pragmatic level. In other words, this ‘affect’ through the stress shift carries another pragmatic meaning. John’s specific ‘affect’ toward Makiko’s misbehavior in the classroom is revealed.

This affect produced by the teacher was perceived by Makiko. This was discussed during her interview. She said that the teacher’s utterance had strength when the teacher was irritated. She also said that the teacher was not intense, when he addressed her in a way that her name was normally pronounced in Japanese. Makiko was particularly good at spotting one occasion where the teacher had put stress on her name as [ma.KI.ko].

I also interviewed another student who was present at the same lesson, and found that the student also felt that his name had been pronounced with stress when John was not relaxed towards them.

Accordingly, we can say that the students perceived affect through the addressing in the interaction between the students and the teacher. This affect is revealed in the EFL classroom, where the contact occurs between the target language, that is English and the students’ native language. In other words, the affect – which operates negatively – is realised due to the contact between the languages. On the other hand, there is addressing to the student by Karen, which did not operate interpersonally as much as John’s addressing to his students.

## **Conclusion**

In this paper, I have presented my investigation of ‘affects’ in EFL classroom produced through contact between English and the students’ native language. The study has been conducted with special attention to addressing the students’ names at the interaction between the native English speaker teachers and the native Japanese speaker students. From the outcomes of the study, I was able to confirm the significance of affect represented in addressing. Moreover, the study has shown that there are different degrees in affect produced by the address form use, which depends on the teachers. Follow-up interviews with both the teachers and the students have helped me confirm this. The follow-up interviews have also shown that the students perceived affect through contact between the languages differently, depending on the teachers.

Affect produced by addressing is intangible. Therefore, it has not received enough attention by researchers. As the study has suggested, however, it plays a significant role in human interactions. In other words, the researchers who are interested in human interactions should not avoid discussing it. This kind of study is worthwhile, as it enables us to describe affect realized in interactions in particular contexts.

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## Appendix: Transcription conventions

<i>Italics</i>	the use of an address form focussed on e.g. <i>Makiko</i>
ma.KI.ko	CAPITAL shows stress: stress on KI, Næ, O (note: stress mentioned here is relative)
Næ.o.mi	
næ.O.mi	

'utterance'	utterance in Japanese
('utterance')	translation into English
[.]	syllable boundary
( )	information about interaction
.	indicates sentence-final intonation
?	indicates rising intonation
...	noticeable pause
.....	longer pause (more than about 3 seconds)
[ ]	brackets between two lines show overlap
=	to the right or left of an utterance indicates continuation
Names	names appearing in the data except Naomi and Makiko remain anonymous.