

Choices in Terms of Address: A Sociolinguistic Study of Chinese and American English Practices

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Previous studies have shown that similarities and differences exist between Chinese and English on terms of address. Data about usages of terms of address in these studies were obtained from questionnaires. In this study, the usages of address are collected from movies which are considered to better reflect social reality by portraying various interpersonal relationships in different situations. Fifty-six different forms of addresses used in these movies are recorded and analyzed in specific contexts. The findings indicate that besides the determinants of interpersonal relationship, factors in a context including who, when, where, to whom the address form is used and with what kind of intentions also play important role in determining the choice of terms of address, both in Chinese and English.

1. Introduction

Terms of address, defined loosely as words used in a speech event that refer to the addressee of that speech event, can be extremely important conveyors of social information (Parkinson 1985:1). In this article, the term “terms of address” only refers to vocatives, i.e. terms of direct address to call persons (Chao 1956:217), such as names, like *Mary*, titles without a name, like *Sir* and *Doctor*, or any word used to address a person, like *hey* and *man*.

The study of personal address has always been a popular topic within sociolinguistics, because terms of address open communicative acts and set the tone for the interchanges that follow. Also they establish the relative power and distance of speaker and hearer (Wood and Kroger 1991:145).

Notable among other studies, Brown and Ford (1961) proposed the semantic rules governing address in American English based on a varied collection of data. They found that the most common forms of address are the first name (FN) and the title plus last name (TLN) in American English and that status and intimacy between speakers are the two major factors that determine the choice of address. This characteristic was later on expressed as the Invariant Norm of Address (Brown 1965), which is claimed to constitute a culturally universal rule: that the linguistic form used to an inferior in dyads of unequal

status is used in dyads of equal status among intimates, and that the linguistic form used to a superior in dyads of unequal status is used in dyads of equal status among strangers. This invariance has been confirmed for a variety of disparate European and non-European languages (Befu and Norbeck 1958; Brown and Ford 1961; Slobin 1963). Furthermore, Kroger, Cheng and Leong's study claimed that the universal relationship between social power and intimacy can also be extended to Chinese (1979).

Kroger, Wood and Kim (1984) further compared the usage of terms of address in Korean, Greek and Chinese, which revealed substantial cross-cultural consistency.

However, Chinese is far distant from American English linguistically and culturally. Firstly, Chinese is a member of the Sino-Tibetan language family and completely unrelated to Indo-European, to which English and most other European languages belong. Secondly, Chinese culture is one of the oldest surviving cultures which has developed separately for thousands years. In terms of address, the actual usages of addresses in these two societies are expected to vary. On one hand, terms of address reflect interpersonal relationships. In China, that the family is the basis of society is perhaps more true of China than of any other highly developed nation, hence the Chinese have been interested in relationship terms from ancient times until the present (Chen & Shryock 1932:623). However, the U.S. lacks China's long and continuous history, and its population is more ethnically and culturally diverse. On the other hand, terms of address embody rules of politeness and underlying cultural ideology. Address forms are an integral part of polite language use and therefore they figure prominently in several of the strategies described by politeness theory (Brown & Levinson 1987). Since politeness rules vary in different cultures, terms of address will vary accordingly to adapt to different rules.

Chao (1956) provided a detailed description of the conditions of actual use of terms in various interpersonal relations among Chinese people, the grammatical status of the terms of address, and the formal conditions for their occurrence. One outstanding characteristic of Chinese terms of address is it has a much more complicated kinship system than that of American English.

Zhou (1998) investigated how to address non-family members among Chinese and Americans by questionnaire. The findings suggested that great differences exist between the two languages because of the distant cultural tradition and social background. Firstly, kinship terms are extended to non-family members in Chinese while it is rare in American English. Chinese use kinship terms, such as grandpa, grandma, aunt, uncle, brother and sister, to address their parents' friends, their colleagues and friends. However, Americans use general social terms of address to address these non-family members, such as Mr., Ms., Miss or given names. Second, titles are used more often to address superiors by Chinese than by Americans.

Wang (2003) also noticed the differences between these two languages in terms of using titles and kinship terms when addressing people. He ascribed these differences to different sociocultural factors and politeness rules. For example, seniority is regarded

more highly in Chinese than in the U.S. Therefore, age is considered an important factor in determining the choice of terms of address in Chinese. Moreover, it is considered polite to be humble and to show respect to others in Chinese culture while it is standard for most relationships to be regarded as equal in American culture. Therefore, more nonreciprocal exchanges of address are used in Chinese while there are more reciprocal exchanges in English.

To sum up, in terms of the comparison between Chinese and American English, these studies draw the following conclusions:

- 1) The Invariant Norm of Address can be applied in both languages. Status and intimacy are two factors influencing the choice of address, which indicates its substantial cross-cultural consistency.
- 2) The actual usages of terms of address in these two languages vary greatly. The system of terms of address is more complicated in Chinese than that in American English. Major differences are the usage of kinship terms and usage of titles.
- 3) The reasons leading to these differences can be traced to the cultural background, historical development, and social structure.

In the past, investigators have relied largely on questionnaires to obtain data. For example, Zhou (1998) investigated the actual usage of address among Chinese from 27 provinces and among Americans from 35 states by means of questionnaires. Kroger et al. (1979, 1984) designed a Chinese Forms of Address Questionnaire (CFAD) to collect data. Although one can collect a large amount of data in a short time by using a questionnaire, its disadvantages are substantial. First, when being asked which forms of address ought to be used vis-à-vis target persons, respondents usually gave answers based on imaginary situations. Being given only a question or a brief description of a situation, they could only rely on their memory of their own or others' experiences. Thus the responses were very likely unnatural, incomplete, or even inaccurate. Furthermore, if respondents have never had the occasion to address the target person, they may have to give a hypothetical answer. For instance, if they have never had a chance to address their parents' superiors, they would select a form of address for the questionnaire which may not be the one they would actually use in real communication.

Additionally, most studies in the past are formulated according to certain interpersonal relationships. A typical survey would ask how participants address people such as your colleagues or your superiors. Kroger et al (1979) conducted a survey through questionnaires which asked participants to select which forms of address are used vis-à-vis target persons from multiple choices. By doing this, interpersonal relationships become the only factor that determines the choice of term of address while other factors are ignored.

To avoid the potentially unnatural and imaginary responses in a questionnaire, the data of forms of address should be collected from various situations in daily life among different people. In this study, the usages of address are collected from movies because movies reflect social reality by portraying various interpersonal relationships in different situations.

The purpose of this study is (a) to investigate the factors that may influence the choice of terms of address besides interpersonal relationships; and b) to examine the differences between Chinese and Americans regarding the actual usage of address in situation-based contexts. In this way, we hope to measure address exchange from a livelier and more realistic perspective than questionnaires.

2. Data and Method

In this study, I collect the usage of addresses from two Chinese movies, *A Watched Pot Never Boils* and *Crazy Stone*, and two American movies, *Shallow Hal* and *Million Dollar Baby*. All these movies were produced after 2001. They portray the daily lives of people in modern-day U.S. and China. Therefore, terms of address in these movies represent their actual usage in current society.

All terms of address that appear in these movies are recorded as well as the context in which each term of address is used, including the relationship between addresser and addressee; the personal information of the two speakers including their gender, age, profession, the place where the speech event occurred, and other information such as the motivation of the speaker.

There are about 35 different terms of address in the Chinese movies and 21 in the American movies used between family members, friends, colleagues, strangers and so on. The situations cover the most common places people work and live, including interactions at home, workplaces, and other social institutions such as hospitals and restaurants.

In order to compare the results with those of past studies, the method of classifying these terms of address used in these movies follows the format established by Kroger et al. (1984). Based on Brown's Invariant Norm of address, Kroger divided interpersonal relationships into six categories according to equality and intimacy. The six dyadic categories are illustrated in the following chart. These are: (a) unequal intimate dyads: self superordinate; (b) unequal intimate dyads: self subordinate; (c) unequal non-intimate dyads: self superordinate; (d) unequal non-intimate dyads: self subordinate; (e) equal intimate dyads; (f) equal non-intimate dyads (Kroger et al. 1984)..

3. Results and Discussion

The 56 forms of address used in the movies are grouped under the six dyadic categories identified in the following six tables. They are expressed as 1) the relationship between addresser and addressee; 2) the addresser and addressee; 3) actual usage of terms of address in real communications; 4) description of the context in which the term of address is used, including when the term of address is used, where the speech event

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occurs, and other situational information. The six tables depict the forms of address used between each category of dyads in Chinese and English.

Table 1. Terms of address used in the equal and intimate dyad

	Relationship	Addresser/ Addressee	Address form	Description of the context
C H I N E S E	Friend	His colleague/ Sanbao	FN	His colleague calls him <i>Sanbao</i> at their workplace. Both are security guards, male, in their twenties.
		His colleague/ Bao Shihong	LN+Kinship term	One colleague who is younger than Bao Shihong calls him <i>Bao ge</i> [Bao Brother] at their workplace or in other situations. They have a very good relationship.
		Mr. He/ Bao Shihong	Old+LN	Mr. He, a police officer, calls Bao Shihong <i>Lao Bao</i> [old+LN] when Mr. Bao comes to the police station and asks for Mr. He's help for a case. They are well-known alumni and have a very good relationship. Both are in their forties.
		Bao Shihong/ Mr. He	Nicknames	Same as above. Bao Shihong calls his alumnus <i>He Danaoke</i> [He Big Head] when they meet because Mr. He has a big head.
	Significant other	Chen Hong/ Liu Hao	LN+title	Chen Hong calls Liu Hao <i>Liu Shifu</i> [Liu Master] at the hospital when Liu comes to visit her. Chen felt sick and Liu brought her to the hospital and assisted her financially. Chen is very grateful to him. They just got to know each other at this time. Both Chen Hong and Liu Hao are in their late twenties. Liu Hao operates a manual cab. Shifu is a general term for blue-collar workers in China.
			LN+kinship term	When Chen Hong and Liu Hao become closer to each other, Chen Hong calls Liu Hao <i>Liu Dage</i> [Liu Brother].
			Full name	Chen Hong calls Liu Hao by his full name when their relationship develops further and they fall in love.
E N G L I S H	Friend	His neighbors, colleagues/Hal	FN	When they greet Hal, they always use his first name, <i>Hal</i> , no matter whether they are male or female, older or younger than Hal.
		Sally/Walt	Boy	When Walt asks a favor from Sally, "Could you take me for a walk?" "Come on, boy." Walt is a disabled person. Both are in their thirties.
		Rosemary/ Her friends	Guys	Rosemary addresses his friends when introducing her boy friend to them "Hi, guys, this is..." All these people are in their twenties and have a good relationship.
	Significant other	Hal/ Rosemary Shanahan	Pet name	Most of the time Hal calls his girl friend Rosemary by this pet name <i>Rosy</i> , at Rosy's home when her parents are present, or with other friends.
			FN	He uses <i>Rosemary</i> to address his girl friend when he apologizes to her in front of Rosy's parents at a party.
			Sweetie	When they are alone or in private, Hal calls Rosemary <i>sweetie</i> .
		Rosy's mother/ Rosy's father	Darling	Rosy's mother calls her husband Darling at the dinner table when only her family members are present.
			FN	Rosy's mother calls her husband <i>Steve</i> at a party when a lot of people are present.

NOTES: FN = first name; LN = last name

Table 1 shows the terms of address used in the equal and intimate dyad such as friends, well-known colleagues, alumni and significant others.

In terms of the differences between Chinese and English, it is found that age is an important factor that influences the choice of term of address in Chinese but not in English. For example, first name is used in English between friends or colleagues regardless of age. But in Chinese, to address colleagues or friends who are middle-aged or older, old plus last name is more common and polite. First name is more commonly used between young people. Additionally, kinship terms are used between friends in Chinese but not in English.

As can be seen, the forms of address vary greatly in different contexts, both in Chinese and English. This is due to several factors as follows.

Firstly, the factor of time plays an important role in the choice of terms of address. Note that here time not only refers to physical time but refers to particular situations. As shown in Table 1, three different address forms are used between Liu Hao and Chen Hong. The change of address forms signifies the development of their relationship. In the movie *A Watched Pot Never Boils*, the two persons do not know each other at first but later on they become close friends and get married. At the very beginning of the movie when they just get to know each other, Chen Hong calls Liu Hao as *Liu Shifu* [Liu master]. When they become closer to each other, she calls him *Liu Dage* [Liu brother]. And finally the address form is changed to *Liu Hao* when their relationship develops further. This factor of time suggests that the choice of terms of address is a dynamic phenomenon. One may choose different address forms for the same person at different stages.

Meanwhile, there are various address forms used in the same dyad, and in most cases they are not interchangeable in a certain context of communication because different forms of address convey different meanings. In Table 1, four different forms of address are found between well-known colleagues or friends in Chinese: first name, old plus first name, nickname, first name or last name plus brother. For example, Bao Shihong is addressed as *Lao Bao* [old plus last name] by his well known alumni. Because Mr. Bao is in his forties, old plus last name is used to show respect. But Mr. Bao does not address his former classmate in the same way as *Lao He*, rather he uses *He da naoke* [He big head]. Using a nickname demonstrates their intimacy. Audiences can easily sense the good relationship between them just from this form of address.

It is also important in what location the terms of address are exchanged. In Table 1, Hal usually calls his girlfriend Rosemary Shanahan *Rosy* in public, but *sweetie* in private. Also he uses *Rosemary* to express his sincerity when he is apologizing to her in front of her parents at a party. Another example is the address forms used by Rosemary's mother when addressing her father. As shown in Table 1, she addresses her husband as *Darling* at the dinner table where only family members are present while she calls him *Steve* at a party where a lot of people are present.

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Table 2. Terms of address used in the equal and non-intimate dyad

	Relationship	Addresser/ addressee	Address forms	Description of the context
C H I N E S E	Service person and customer	Marriage agent/ Liu Hao	LN + title	The boss of the marriage agency greets Liu Hao, his customer, by <i>Liu Shifu</i> [Liu Master]. They know each other well.
	Customer and service person	Passenger/ Liu Hao	Profession	A female passenger is calling Liu Hao <i>Sanlunche</i> [Tricycle] from across the street, for she wants to take his manual cab.
	Colleague, relationship not very close	He Wenlan/ Liu Hao	LN + title	Miss He comes to see Liu Hao to ask for a favor and calls him <i>Liu Shifu</i> [Liu Master]. They are co-workers but not quite familiar with each other.
		'Ye Lang'/ He Wenlan	Full name+Title	A man only known by his nickname 'Ye Lang' [wild wolf] is greeting his former colleague He Wenlan after a long separation. He calls her <i>He Wenlan Nvshi</i> [Madam He]. Ye Lang is flaunting his wealth and dallying with Ms. He.
		Secretary/ Manager	LN+Title	The secretary calls Manager Qin <i>Qin Jingli</i> [Manager Qin]. They are at the same company but not very close to each other.
	Patient and doctor	Patient/ Doctor	Profession title	Liu Hao calls a doctor <i>Daifu</i> [Doctor] when they talk at hospital. They do not know to each other.
	Student's parent and teacher	Liu Hao/ His son's instructor	Profession title	Liu Hao calls his son's teacher <i>Laoshi</i> [teacher] at school.
	Strangers	Liu Hao/ Passerby	Ai	Liu Hao greets a female passerby in a park by ai [Hey], because he does not know her name and thought she is the person he is waiting for. Both are in their twenties.
		Passengers	General title	The addresser using <i>Xiansheng</i> is from Hongkong, in his thirties.
		Passengers in a bus	General title	Judged from his accent, the addresser using <i>Tongzhi</i> [comrade] is from Northeast China, at his forties.
			General title	The addresser using <i>Shifu</i> [master] looks like a peasant and he is asking for help. Judged from his accent, he is from north China, in his thirties.
			General title	Judging from his accent, the addresser using <i>Xiongdi</i> [Younger brother] is from Beijing, north China. He is in his thirties. The addressee is a peasant, in his thirties.
	Business partner	Land agent/ Xie Qiangli, Head of a factory	Old + LN	The land agent calls the head of a factory <i>Lao Xie</i> [old + LN]. Because the factory is experiencing economic depression, the land agent is persuading him to sell his factory but the head of the factory is unwilling. The head of the factory is in his fifties and the land agent is slightly younger.
Police/ Xie Qiangli, head of a factory		LN + title	A policeman calls the head of the factory <i>Xie Changzhang</i> [Head of the factory Xie] when talking about a case with him.	

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E N G L I S H	Patient and doctor	Patient/ Doctor	Doctor	At a hospital. The patient does not know the doctor.
			Dr. Sayed	At a hospital. The patient knows the doctor.
	Service person and customer	Shop assistant/ Customer	Miss	The shop assistant is asking a lady whether she needs help.
	Club assistant and club member	Club assistant/ Club member	Daniel	The club assistant is in his fifties. Daniel is in his twenties. They are familiar with each other.

Table 2 shows forms of address in the equal but non-intimate dyad. Three forms of address are shared in both languages: title, general address, and combination of last name plus title. In terms of the differences, in Chinese, kinship terms are used widely to address non-family members, like colleagues or strangers. For example, *xiongdi* [younger brother] and *Dage* [older brother] are used as a general term to address strangers. In English, the first name is also used within the non-intimate dyad, which is does not occur in the Chinese movies.

Again, address forms in this category reflect the influence of several factors in a context. One factor which determines the choice of address forms is the speaker's native place. China has seven major dialects and each of these influences the way people speak in different ways. For example, in Table 2, five general terms of address are found in the two Chinese movies: *tongzhi* [comrade], *shifu* [master], *xiansheng* [sir], *xiongdi* [younger brother], and *dage* [older brother]. These different forms reveal the speakers' different native homes.

The speakers' motivation further complicates the choice of terms of address. As shown in Table 2, *Dage* [older brother] is used by a passenger, when he apologizes to another passenger for spilling the cola on him by accident. He also used *Dage* [older brother] to address a stranger when he wanted to borrow something from that person. Here *Dage* [older brother] is used to shorten the distance between people and build up a relationship.

Table 3 indicates how a subordinate addresses their superordinate in the unequal and intimate dyad, such as when children address their parents or employees address their employers when they have a good relationship.

Obviously, address forms among family members in Chinese and English have some similarities. For the present we will limit our discussion to the several factors that create differences in people's choice of address forms.

In Table 3, emotion is recognized as a factor that influences the choice of address. For instance, in the Chinese movie *A Watched Pot Never Boils*, Liu Xiaohao is the stepson of Liu Hao. He does not want to call him Dad because he thinks his stepfather does not love him and he wants to distance himself from him. So he always addresses his stepfather as *Ai* [hey]. But later when he finally discovers that Liu Hao really cares about him and loves him, he changes the address form to *baba* [Dad]. Another example is the form of address used between Bao Shihong and Xie Qianli. Xie is the boss of Bao but they have a very close relationship. Bao usually calls Xie *Lao Xie* [old+LN]. But when

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Bao learns that Xie Qianli sold their factory to the land agent, he is extremely upset, so he uses his boss' full name *Xie Qianli* to scold him.

Table 3. Terms of address used in the unequal and intimate dyad (subordinate to superordinate)

	Relations hip	Addresser/ Addressee	Address forms	Description of the context
C H I N E S E	Stepson and stepfather	Liu Xiaohao/ Liu Hao	Ai	In the first half of the movie, Liu Hao's stepson always calls him by <i>ai</i> [hey] because he does not like his stepfather and wants to distance himself from him.
			Kinship term	At the end of the movie, his stepson finally addresses Liu Hao with <i>baba</i> [Dad] because he finds out his stepfather loves him.
		His son's classmate/ Liu Hao	Kinship term	Liu Hao's stepson's classmate visits Liu Hao's home and addresses Liu Hao by <i>Shushu</i> [uncle].
		Liu Xiaohao/ His classmate's grandfather	Kinship term	Liu Xiaohao visits his classmate's home. He says hello to his classmate's grandfather by calling him <i>Yeye</i> [grandpa].
	Employee and employer	Bao Shihong/ Xie Qianli	Old+LN	Bao Shihong is the head security guard in the factory and Xie Qianli is the head of the factory. They have a very good relationship. Bao usually addresses Xie by <i>Lao Xie</i> [Old+LN] at their workplace.
			Full name	Bao Shihong is using <i>Xie Qianli</i> to scold him because he just learnt that he sold their factory to the land agent. Bao Shihong is extremely upset.
		Bao Shihong's subordinate/ Bao Shihong	LN+head	The addressee is the head security guard at a factory. There are several guards in his office. Those who are not quite familiar with Mr. Bao call him <i>Bao tou</i> [LN+head] at their workplace.
			LN+brother	San bao is a security guard who gets along well with Mr. Bao, and he always calls Mr. Bao <i>Baoge</i> to show their intimacy. Sanbao is in his twenties, and Mr. Bao is in his thirties.
		Manager Qin/ Board chairman	LN+title	Manager Qin always calls the board chairman <i>Feng Dong</i> . Manager Qin acts submissively towards the board chairman Feng who is very bossy. They know each other very well.
	E N G L I S H	Family members	Rosemary/ Her father	Kinship term
Employee and employer		Hal/ Dave, his boss	FN	Dave is Hal's superior and they are very familiar with each other. This speech event occurs at Dave's office.

The five different address forms used between subordinate and superordinate in Chinese also shows that the choice of address form is determined by a number of factors besides interpersonal relationships. One factor is the degree of intimacy between the subordinate and superordinate. The term *Bao ge* [Bao Brother] means the subordinate has a brother-like relationship with the superordinate, while the term *Bao tou* [Bao head] recognizes the superior position of the superordinate while expressing a friendly

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intimacy. Another factor is the personality of the subordinate and superordinate. For example, Manager Qin always calls his boss as *Feng Dong* [Feng Chairman]. Not only is Chairman Feng very bossy and likes his authority to be acknowledged and respected, but also Manager Qin likes to flatter and caters to his boss's pleasure.

Table 4. Terms of address used in unequal and intimate dyad (superordinate to subordinate)

	Relation-ship	Addresser/ Addressee	Address forms	Description of the context
C H I N E S E	Father and son	Liu Hao/ Liu Xiaohao	FN	Liu Hao always calls his son by his first name <i>Xiaohao</i> .
	Colleague's mother and his son's colleague	Sanbao's mom/ Bao Shihong	Nickname	Sanbao is Bao Shihong's colleague and they have a good relationship. Bao Shihong visits his home and Sanbao's mom greets him using his nickname, <i>Baozi</i> [steamed dumpling]. Mr. Bao is also very familiar with his family members.
	Employer and employee	Xie Qianli/ Bao Shihong	Old+LN	Bao Shihong is the head security guard in the factory and Xie Qianli is the head of the factory. Bao is in his thirties and Xiw is in his fifties. They have very good relationship. They usually call each other <i>Lao Bao</i> and <i>Lao Xie</i> .
		Bao Shihong/ Sanbao	FN	Bao Shihong is the head security guard in the factory and Sanbao is his subordinate. They have a good relationship. Bao Shihong usually calls him by his first name.
E N G L I S H	Parents and child	Rosemary's mom/ Rosemary	Rosy	At home.
			My darling	At home.
E N G L I S H	Employer And employee	Dave/ Hal	Hal	Dave is Hal's superior and they are very familiar with each other. They usually address each other by their first names.
			Man	Dave is Hal's superior. When Dave is comforting Hal for not getting a promotion, Dave says, "Sorry, man," at his office.

Table 4 lists the address forms used in the four movies in the unequal and intimate dyad, such as when parents address their children, or employers address their employees.

In this category there is not much difference in the forms of address among family members between Chinese and English, both use first names and pet names. One minor difference is more endearment address forms are used in English among family members, such as *darling* or *sweetie*.

As for the address forms between employers and employees, two forms are found in Chinese movies: first name and old plus last name. This discrepancy results from the differences in age. Bao Shihong is in his thirties and Sanbao is in his twenties. Therefore, Bao Shihong is addressed as *Lao Bao* [Old+Bao] but Sanbao is addressed by his first name. There are also two forms between employer and employee in English, as shown in Table 4: *Hal* and *Man*. This difference is caused by the situational context. First name is used in normal situations while *man* is used to comfort Hal for not getting a promotion.

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Table 5. Terms of address used in the unequal and non-intimate dyad (subordinate to superordinate)

	Relationship	Addresser/ Addressee	Address forms	Description of the context
C H I N E S E	Employee and employer	Doctor/ The director of the office	Title	The doctor is asking about the director's decision at the hospital by using <i>Zhuren</i> [director] to address his superordinate.
		Staff/ Xie Qianli, the head of the factory	LN+Title	Most of the workers in the factory call the head of the factory <i>Xie Changzhang</i> [Head of factory Xie] at the factory.
	Service person and customer	Doorman/ a VIP customer	LN+Title	The doorman of a night club is greeting a VIP customer. He recognizes and flatters him by calling him <i>Yao Jingli</i> [manager Yao].
E N G L I S H	Boxer and coach	Maggie Fitzgerald/ Frankie Dunn	Title+LN	Mr. Dunn is a boxing coach, in his fifties. Maggie is his female boxer, in her thirties. They also become very close friends later on. In two situations Maggie addresses him by <i>Mr. Dunn</i> : 1. When they met for the first time. 2. When Maggie apologizes to him.
			Title	Whenever they talk about the fight, Maggie calls him <i>boss</i> .
			FN	When their relationship develops, and Maggie finds out that only Frankie can understand and support her. She said, "I got nobody but you, Frankie."
	Employee and employer	Hal/ His boss	Title+LN	Hal visits his boss's home for the first time. Hal addresses his boss as Mr. Shanahan. His boss is also his girlfriend's father.

When it comes to the unequal and non-intimate dyad, it can be seen that titles are used much more often in both languages when a subordinate addresses a superordinate, as indicated in Table 5.

One interesting point worth noting is the address forms between the boxer and her coach in the movie *Million Dollar Baby*. Again, the factor of context influences the choice of address forms. When they talk about the fights, the female boxer always calls her coach as *boss*. But when they are talking about their personal life, she addresses him by his first name *Frankie*. In two other formal situations she addresses him as *Mr. Dunn*: when she introduces herself to him and when she apologizes to him.

Table 6. Terms of address used in the unequal and non-intimate dyad (superordinate to subordinate)

	Relationship	Addresser/ Addressee	Address forms	Description of the context
C H I N E S E	Teacher--student	Teacher/ Liu Xiaohao	Liu Xiaohao	Liu Xiaohao's teacher is angry because Xiaohao is misbehaving in her class. She does not like Liu Xiaohao because he is the trouble-maker.

Only one example is found in the unequal and non-intimate dyad among these four movies, but there are certainly more examples in actual situations. In this example, the teacher calls the student by his full name, which is common in Chinese society.

4. Conclusion and Future Study

The data clearly indicate that besides interpersonal relationships, context has a substantial effect on the choices of terms of address, both in Chinese and English. A number of factors – such as who, when, where, to whom the form is used, and with what kind of intentions – have a significant influence. Therefore, the choice of term of address cannot be determined without considering the concrete context in which the address forms are used.

Brown and Ford (1961:378) state that speaker may use more than one form of the proper name for the same addressee, sometimes saying TLN, sometimes FN or LN or a nickname, sometimes creating phonetic variants of either FN or the nickname. However, the choice is not arbitrary. For instance, several address forms can be used between friends in Chinese, such as given name, nickname, old plus last name, and last name plus brother. But in most cases, they are not interchangeable. If you address your friend by his nickname in a formal situation, that address form may embarrass him. But it would be appropriate in a private party. Therefore, people use different forms of address to express their intentions. For instance, the husband may address his wife as Jennifer when he is mad at her, whereas under normal circumstances he would call her Jenny. A Chinese man may intentionally use a girl's given name to show their intimacy. How one address another is not static but dynamic and contextualized.

In terms of the limitations, since only four movies are examined to collect the data in this study, it can be argued that more forms of address are actually used in daily life. However, this study does not pretend to be exhaustive, it is an attempt to provide another method in examining the usage of terms of address in communication. An expansive cross-cultural investigation from real life situations among different people is expected in the future.

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