

Exploration of Honorifics in Japanese-Balinese Intercultural Marriages

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Abstract—In Bali, honorifics serve as interactional tools determined by the situational context of discourse. In this regard, the present research aimed to uncover patterns of honorific usage in intercultural marriages between Japanese and Balinese individuals within the realm of pragmatic studies. The researchers employed observation along with data collection techniques involving listening, note-taking, and interviewing families of Japanese-Balinese intermarriages. Primary data consisted of dialogues among intermarried families in the districts of Badung, Gianyar, and Denpasar City, considering the high frequency of intercultural marriages in these regions in Bali. The findings revealed a dynamic interplay of honorifics within the context of cross-cultural marriages, shedding light on how language interaction reflected and shaped social interaction norms based on the context of cross-cultural marriages. Specifically, honorifics for Balinese women and children followed the social status of the father's family. Naming conventions for women from the Wangsa Jaba caste, including foreign citizens married to men from the Tri Wangsa caste, involved a process termed "perkawinan naik status" (status-elevating marriage), where the woman was given the honorific "jero" followed by her first name. In contrast, those not belonging to the Wangsa Jaba caste were named according to the birth order of the Japanese woman. This condition also applied to children born from intercultural marriages. Considering these results, this research is expected to contribute significantly to the academic literature on cultural anthropology, linguistics, and cross-cultural studies, offering insights into tolerance, appreciation of differences, and the ability to adapt to cross-cultural relationships.

Index Terms—honorifics, intercultural marriage, sociolinguistics

I. INTRODUCTION

Honorifics are expressions used to greet, address, or refer to individuals (Chaer, 2000). Across languages, each possesses a system of honorifics utilized as tools for communication and interaction. They are essential and profoundly influenced by specific interactional contexts (Kartomiharjo, 1988). Accordingly, communication can be directed appropriately by focusing on honorifics uttered by speakers (Rusbiyantoro, 2011). This signifies that every language globally incorporates various honorifics that address interlocutors in diverse interactional settings (Kridalaksana, 1974). Honorifics can also serve as a medium for communication, not merely for greetings, but also for addressing, admonishing, or referring to the second party or interlocutor (Chaer, 2010). Generally, honorifics can take the form of morphemes, words, or phrases employed as tools for communication and interaction among speakers in societal life, contingent upon different conversational contexts or situations based on the nature of the relationship between speakers (Kridalaksana, 1982).

Every language worldwide harbors a system of honorifics, as the appropriate usage directed towards interlocutors manifests linguistic politeness (Rusbiyantoro, 2014; Saddhono et al., 2024). The system of honorifics also extends to the Balinese language. In this context, the caste system influences the terminology of kinship honorifics (Aryasuari, 2020), leading to the utilization of the Sor Singgih Basa Bali levels, which reflects an individual's level of politeness when communicating (Savitri & Dewi, 2019). The Balinese populace employs these linguistic levels as a direct reference for the speaker's level (Narayana, 1984). Sor Singgih Basa Bali comprises levels closely associated with the degree of eloquence in the Balinese language. It is better recognized as Anggah Ungguhing Basa Bali. The utilization meticulously considers the interlocutor's position, as knowledge of someone's identity and status facilitates the speaker's selection of the appropriate address level (Tinggen, 1994).

Due to the concept of linguistic politeness, honorifics become crucial in initiating communication. In Balinese society, the honorific system is generally observed through familial structures closely tied to participants' age, familial status, gender, and direct familial relationships. The forms of Balinese honorifics vary depending on the situation and the social status of the participants, owing to the persistence of traditional stratification based on birth (lineage), which categorizes individuals into the Tri Wangsa, a system of nobility carried from birth, consisting of three classes:

Brahmana, responsible for religious affairs such as priests and religious scholars; Ksatrya, responsible for governance such as kings and officials; and Wesya, responsible for societal welfare such as merchants. Additionally, in the Catur Wangsa categorization, the Sudra class, the lower caste responsible for assisting the Tri Wangsa, is also included (Parta et al., 2021; Saputra et al., 2023). This condition reflects that honorifics used among the Wangsa Jaba family or ordinary people are informal or in the standard language form, contrasting with the Tri Wangsa or aristocratic families who utilize refined or polite Balinese language (Suwija, 2018; Temaja & Bayu, 2018; Debi et al., 2023). This honorific system mirrors the social hierarchy and lineage status in Balinese society, where birth status and family caste play significant roles. Moreover, it reflects the high values of honor and respect towards royal families and prevailing social structures in Bali.

In contrast to the Balinese honorific system, in the Japanese language, the manner of addressing individuals is highly complex, reflecting social hierarchy, status, age, gender, and interpersonal relationships among speakers and interlocutors (Kabaya, 2010). This condition illustrates that both Japanese and Balinese honorific systems possess distinct characteristics. This linguistic phenomenon is evident in intercultural marriages between Japanese and Balinese individuals on Bali region. Interlingual marriages with different cultural backgrounds not only create unique individual relationships but also foster rich and intricate cultural exchanges. In today's digital era, many people from various countries marry partners from different cultural backgrounds. Correspondingly, intercultural marriages between Bali and Japan may present unique communication and cultural adaptation challenges, including the use of honorifics.

Previous studies have examined the phenomenon of honorifics, revealing that variations in pronoun forms, including kinship terms, are influenced by factors such as social status, familiarity, emotions, and activities. Additionally, politeness strategies are employed by speakers towards their interlocutors to prevent communication errors, which could lead to conflicts among individuals, families, and speech communities (Trijanto, 2022). Furthermore, a study on the use of honorifics in Makassar movie dialogues in YouTube videos identified Indonesian honorifics with a Makassar dialect (Herisanti, 2021; Rohmadi et al., 2023). In contrast, an investigation by Sartika (2016) on the Manggarai language found that honorifics were based on kinship relations, professional and hierarchical titles, personal names, and pronouns. The determinants included not only differences in profession and status but also social class defined by gender, familiarity, age, and kinship relations. Mixed-marriage interactions, particularly those between different nationalities, are characterized by daily familial interactions marked by tolerance and sympathy towards partners, supported by flexibility and openness to differences. This effort aims to foster harmony in cross-national marital life (Sirait, 2014). These various research findings highlight the nuanced nature of honorifics, while the present study focused on exploring honorifics in Japanese-Balinese intercultural marriages. This research is expected to elucidate the dynamics of honorifics as reflections of social norms and hierarchical relationships within each respective society.

II. METHOD

This research explored the use of honorifics in intercultural marriages between Japanese and Balinese individuals. The method employed was observation incorporating data collection techniques involving attentive listening to directly observe the daily lives of Japanese-Balinese couples and study their interactions, including the use of honorifics in various contexts. Recording and conducting in-depth interviews with intermarried couples, their families, and local community members could provide valuable insights into the use of honorifics and their significance within broader cultural and social contexts. The data utilized was primary data, referring to the information obtained directly from the source (Marzuki, 1986), consisting of dialogues among Japanese-Balinese cross-cultured families residing in the districts of Badung, Gianyar, and Denpasar City, considering the high rate of intercultural marriages in these three districts in Bali. The techniques employed in data analysis were pragmatic equivalence and referential equivalence. The pragmatic equivalence involved analysis techniques using conversation partners as tools (Sudaryanto, 1993), while the referential equivalence employed analysis techniques using references that distinguished actors, recipients, beneficiaries, etc. In data analysis, based on Sudaryanto (1993), once the data were acquired, they were categorized based on the exploration of honorifics and underlying factors. This was followed by data validation through data triangulation, which involved comparing and matching results from various data sources to verify findings. The data analysis results were subsequently presented using an informal presentation method, which refers to presenting norms in formulations using ordinary language that contains detailed results of data analysis (Sudaryanto, 1988).

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this exploratory study provide a deeper understanding of communication dynamics and cultural values within Japanese and Balinese societies through an analysis of honorifics. It was evident that the usage of honorifics varied significantly depending on the situational context in which speakers uttered them to their interlocutors. Additionally, social factors, including the cultures of Japanese and Balinese societies, as well as social hierarchy and power structures, strongly influenced the usage of honorifics. In essence, social class, interpersonal relationships like familial (kinship), friendly, collegial, or societal status, and customary religious rituals played significant roles. Hence, children born from Japanese-Balinese intermarried couples typically inherit the social status of their father. This is because Balinese society adheres to patriarchy, known in the Hindu concept as *purusa*, denoting "the backbone of the

family." This concept asserts that a man's status is inherited through marriage. The role of men as *purusa* confers a particular privilege upon them, and when children are born from such marriages, they indirectly follow the paternal lineage. For women of the *Wangsa Jaba* caste who marry men of the *Tri Wangsa* caste, this union is termed a "*perkawinan naik status*" ("status-elevating marriage"). In this type of marriage, the woman receives a new name, typically connoting fragrance and beauty, such as "*jero sandat*" (frangipani flower) or "*jero cempaka*" (champaka flower). In this context, the women are given the prefix "*jero*" in their names, intending to invite them into the *griya* or *puri* (Balinese royal palace or residence). Below are various honorifics among intermarried couples between Japanese and Balinese individuals.

TABLE 1
EXPLORATION OF HONORIFICS IN JAPANESE-BALINESE INTERCULTURAL MARRIAGES

Contexts of Situation	Honorifics	Locations
Japanese women married to men from the <i>Tri Wangsa</i> caste	- <i>Bu Jero</i> - <i>Jero</i> - <i>Jero Melati</i> , etc.	Balinese royal palace or residence (<i>griya</i> or <i>puri</i>) of the <i>Tri Wangsa</i> caste
Children of Japanese women married to men from the <i>Tri Wangsa</i> caste	- <i>Gung ...</i> - <i>Gung Ayu</i> - <i>Dayu ...</i>	Balinese royal palace or residence (<i>puri</i>)
Japanese women meeting their Japanese friends	- Actual names (e.g., Aiko, Hiromi, etc.)	Outside the Balinese royal palace or residence (<i>puri</i>)
Japanese women married to men from the <i>Wangsa Jaba</i> caste	- Names adjusted based on birth order in Bali (e.g., <i>Komang</i> Hiromi, <i>Putu</i> Aiko, etc.)	At home
Children of Japanese women married to men from the <i>Wangsa Jaba</i> caste	- Names adjusted based on birth order in Bali (e.g., <i>Gede R.</i> , etc.)	At home
Japanese women meeting their Japanese friends	- Actual names typically used; family name for those not well-acquainted and first name for those known well.	Outside the house

Context of Situation (1)

Speaker : Gung Mas (Balinese relative)
 Interlocutor : Jero (Japanese woman)
 Location : Ancestral home
 Situation : Gathering for *Galungan* religious ceremony

Dialogue:

Speaker : *Jero, sudah sembahyang?*
 Interlocutor : *Belum. Nanti saja sama anak-anak.*
 Speaker : *Iya, ajiknya mana?*
 Interlocutor : *Masih di sana.*

(Speaker : Jero, have you prayed yet?
 Interlocutor : Not yet. I'll do it later with the kids.
 Speaker : Okay, where's your husband?
 Interlocutor : He's still over there.)

Analysis:

The dialogue occurred between the speaker, a native Balinese relative of the "*Anak Agung*" caste, and the interlocutor, a native Japanese woman, at the ancestral home during the religious ceremony of *Galungan*. The honorific used by the speaker towards the Japanese woman was "*Jero*." It is a term used to address individuals from a caste outside the *Tri Wangsa* or, in Balinese, known as *pungkusan*. In addition, "*Jero*" is an honorific bestowed upon individuals as an appreciation for being accepted into the *Tri Wangsa* caste, typically used by family members, relatives, or non-palace residents. However, it is usually not used by a Balinese husband towards his Japanese wife; instead, the honorific typically consists of the Japanese wife's given name or the term "*mama*," as commonly used by children towards their mothers. This communication pattern aligns with Manggola (2021), who suggests that married couples from different cultures indirectly possess different attitudes, habits, thought patterns, and cultures. Nevertheless, these disparities can be overcome through mutual understanding. Furthermore, the term "*Jero*" is often accompanied by flower names such as *Jero Puspa*, *Jero Melati*, *Jero Sandat*, and others. Thus, even though a Japanese woman is addressed as "*Jero*" within the family, relatives, or household environment, the variation in forms of honorifics for relatives is influenced by status, familiarity, feelings, and activities (Trijanto, 2022). On the other hand, the use of honorifics changes when the Japanese woman interacts with friends from Japan or locally. The honorific used would be her given name, comprising the family name and given name. For example, if her family name is Kawaguchi and her given name is Aiko, intimate friends from Japan would call her by her name, Aiko, with the suffix "*~san*" added. However, when meeting someone new, the honorific would be the family name, "Kawaguchi," followed by "*san*" as a form of respect in Japanese.

Context of Situation (2)

Speaker : Banjar resident
 Interlocutor : Gung Maki (the father is a man from the *Ksatria* caste, and the mother is a Japanese woman)
 Location : In front of the Banjar
 Situation : Banjar resident asking whether it was a working day or a holiday

Dialogue:

Banjar resident : *Gung Maki, libur niki napi mekarye?*
 Gung Maki : *Nggih, libur.*

(Banjar resident : Gung Maki, is today a working day or a holiday?
 Gung Maki : It's a holiday.)

Analysis:

Context of Situation (2) depicts a dialogue between a Banjar resident and a child of a Japanese-Balinese intermarried couple who hailed from the *Ksatria* caste. The honorific used was "Gung," an abbreviation of "Anak Agung," indicating respect. The register of language employed was *alus mider* (polite and respectful but not overly formal), evident in the choice of words such as "niki," meaning "this," and "mekarye," denoting "working." The honorifics used in this context for the child of a Japanese-Balinese intercultural marriage adhered to the caste of the Balinese parent. For instance, a boy born to a *Brahmana* caste would be addressed as "Ida Bagus," while "Ida Ayu" would be used for girls. Similarly, for the *Ksatria* caste, the honorifics for boys are "Anak Agung Gede" or "Anak Agung Ngurah," while for girls are "Anak Agung Ayu," "Anak Agung Sagung," "Anak Agung Mas," or "Anak Agung Istri." Additionally, for the *Wesya* caste, "Gusti Ngurah" or "Dewa Gede" is used for boys, while "Gusti Ayu" or "Dewa Ayu" is used for girls. This phenomenon illustrates that the social status and caste position of children from Japanese-Balinese intermarried couples followed the social status of the father, who was typically Balinese, regardless of the mother's origins. This is because Balinese society follows patriarchy, known in Hindu concepts as "*purusa*," which dictates that their father's lineage determines a person's status. The role of men as "*purusa*" confers certain rights, and children born from such marriages indirectly follow the father's lineage (Kemalasari, 2019).

Context of Situation (3)

Speaker : Grandfather
 Interlocutor : Granddaughter (the father is a man from the *Wangsa Jaba* caste, and the mother is a Japanese woman)
 Location : At home
 Situation : Grandfather asking about granddaughter's school departure time

Dialogue:

Grandfather : *Ayu, hari ini tidak sekolah?*
 Granddaughter : *Sekolah, kak, ini sedang siap-siap.*
 Grandfather : *Mau hujan ini, hati-hati ya.*
 Granddaughter : *Iya, kak.*

(Grandfather : Ayu, aren't you going to school today?
 Granddaughter : I'm going to school, grandpa, just getting ready.
 Grandfather : It might rain. Be careful.
 Granddaughter: Okay, grandpa.)

Analysis:

Context of Situation (3) presents a dialogue between the grandfather (referred to as "*Pekak*" in Balinese, shortened to "*kak*" in spoken discourse) and his granddaughter named Ayu. Ayu was born from the marriage between the grandfather's son, named Wayan, and a Japanese woman named Kyoko. She is their first child. Ayu's full name is Putu Ayumi Dewi, a combination of Balinese and Japanese names. Hence, many of her friends called her "Ayu." This honorific indirectly identified Ayu as the first child of a Balinese father from the *Wangsa Jaba* caste group despite being born to a Japanese mother. This aligns with research findings that children born from intercultural marriages tend to follow their father's lineage (Kemalasari, 2019).

Context of Situation (4)

Speaker : Balinese husband
 Interlocutor : Komang, a Japanese woman who married a Balinese man from the *Wangsa Jaba* caste

Location : At home
 Situation : Asking whether their son (Putu) has eaten or not

Dialogue:

Speaker : *Mang, Komang, Putu sube makan?*
 Interlocutor : *Sube, Bli Wayan.*

(Speaker : Mang, Komang, has Putu eaten?
 Interlocutor : Yes, he has, Bli Wayan.)

Analysis:

When a Japanese woman marries a Balinese man, numerous religious ceremonies are conducted by the Japanese woman, as she is considered to be reborn as a Balinese person. Based on observations and interviews, Japanese women do not receive the honorific title "*jero*" when marrying into the *Wangsa Jaba* caste but typically adopt names similar to Balinese ones based on their hierarchical birth order. In this context (4), being the third child, the Japanese woman's name was Komang, followed by her original name. This name change was not widely known but only by relatives, those in the immediate environment, and siblings. The honorific term "*Komang*" is usually used by speakers within the same community or upon hearing relatives and family members using it, thereby indirectly prompting the person to use it too. However, the honorific changed based on the context of the speaking situation; when meeting outsiders and fellow Japanese women, her given name was still used. The data above reflects that to maintain harmony within the family, Japanese women adopt an attitude of tolerance and sympathy towards their partners, supported by flexibility and openness (Sirait, 2014).

Context of Situation (5)

Speaker 1 : Pak Yan (a neighbor from the *Wangsa Jaba* caste)
 Speaker 2 : Bugek (an aunt from the *Ksatria* caste)
 Interlocutor 1 : Tugek (the first child of an intermarried couple)
 Interlocutor 2 : Bu Jero Melati (a Japanese woman married to a man from the *Ksatria* caste)
 Location : In the *Puri* of Tugek and Bu Jero
 Situation : Preparing for a religious ceremony at the place of worship (*Merajan*)

Dialogue:

Speaker 1 : *Bu Jero, dimana ditaruh linggis? Mau pasang penjor di merajan.*
 Interlocutor 2 : *Ada di belakang gudang dekat merajan.*
 Speaker 1 : *Ya...ya...ya*
 Interlocutor 1 : *Pak Yan, silakan diminum kopinya nggih.*
 Speaker 1 : *Nggih tugek, suksma.*

(Speaker 1 : Bu Jero, where did you put the crowbar? I want to set the *penjor* (tall and curved bamboo pole adorned with young coconut leaves) in the *Merajan*.
 Interlocutor 2 : It's behind the warehouse, near the *Merajan*.
 Speaker 1 : Ah, I see.
 Interlocutor 1 : Pak Yan, please have some coffee.
 Speaker 1 : Yes, Tugek, thank you.)

Analysis:

The context of situation (5) occurred in the *Puri* where Bu Jero Melati and Tugek lived. Pak Yan was a neighbor who often helped in the *Puri* during religious ceremonies. The term "*Puri*" refers to the house of the *Tri Wangsa* lineage, namely the *Ksatria* caste. *Merajan* implies a place of worship for Hindus within each household. *Pak Yan* was an honorific abbreviated from *Bapak Wayan*, identifying a Balinese person from the *Sudra* caste (*Wangsa Jaba*) born as the first child. *Tugek* was also an honorific, abbreviated from "*Ratu Jegeg*" or "beautiful queen," used to address the *Ksatria* caste in Bali. A Japanese woman marrying into the *Ksatria* caste family is also honored with the title "*Ibu Jero*." Nevertheless, in the above context, Tugek still respected Pak Yan by offering coffee and concluding the conversation with "*nggih*," a respectful form of agreement meaning "yes." This demonstrates that the traditional stratification system implemented through honorifics still exists in Balinese society, especially in customary situations. The phenomenon in context (5) illustrates that a child's status in Bali follows that of the father, as does the wife's (the Japanese woman) when she marries into a Balinese family of the *Tri Wangsa* caste. Moreover, Balinese people unfamiliar with Japanese culture do not use the term "*~san*" as an important characteristic of honorifics to address

others. It is one of the honorifics used in Japanese, often employed to show politeness and respect towards someone, especially when speaking to someone unfamiliar, older, or of higher social status (Surya et al., 2020).

Context of Situation (6)

Speaker 1 : Mother (a Japanese woman married to a man from the *Wangsa Jaba* caste)
 Speaker 2 : Father (a husband from the *Wangsa Jaba* caste)
 Interlocutor 1 : Made Hiroshi (the first son of an intermarried couple)
 Interlocutor 2 : Komang Yurina (a daughter)
 Location : At home
 Situation : Asking about tomorrow's activities

Dialogue:

Speaker 1 : *Komang, ben mani megae?*
 Interlocutor 2 : *Megae semengan.*
 Speaker 2 : *Yurina kuliah? Made masuk?*
 Interlocutor 1 : *Iya, besok ada dua mata kuliah.*

(Speaker 1 : Komang, what are your plans for tomorrow?
 Interlocutor 2 : It's just like any other day.
 Speaker 2 : Are you going to campus, Yurina? And, you, Made?
 Interlocutor 1 : Yes, we have two classes tomorrow.)

Analysis:

The dialogue between a husband, a wife, and their two children occurred within the context of a family situation. The wife, married to a man from the *Wangsa Jaba* caste, adopted her husband's social status, thus making her and the children part of the *Wangsa Jaba* caste. Consequently, the children's names followed the caste naming convention based on birth order. The first child is typically named Wayan or Putu, the second is Made or Kadek, the third is Nyoman or Komang, and the fourth is Ketut. This tradition is also observed in women marrying Balinese men, who often adopt diminutive names or those associated with the Balinese community. This process is known as the *Sudhi Wadhani* ceremony, a Hindu ritual for those embracing Hinduism (Daniel, 2017; Hartaka & Gunawan, 2020).

IV. CONCLUSION

The analysis in this descriptive study indicates that the respective cultures and traditions heavily influence the exploration of honorifics in Balinese-Japanese intermarriages. Honorifics are uttered by speakers to their interlocutors and are significantly determined by contextual factors such as location, age, social status, and the position of women upon marrying Balinese men. Social hierarchy and power structures in Japanese and Balinese societies also significantly shape the usage of honorifics. This means that social status, interpersonal relationships within families (kinship), friendships, professional relationships, and status in society or customary religious rituals all play pivotal roles. Children from Balinese-Japanese intermarriages typically inherit the social status of their father's family. Naming conventions for women from the *Wangsa Jaba* caste and foreign individuals marrying into men from the *Tri Wangsa* caste are referred to as "status-elevating marriages." In this concept of marriage, new names are given to women from the *Wangsa Jaba* caste, often connoting fragrances or pleasant scents, such as "jero sandat" (frangipani flower) or "jero cempaka" (champaka flower). In addition, the women from the *Wangsa Jaba* caste married to men of the *Tri Wangsa* caste are given the prefix "jero" to signify their entry into the *griya* or *puri* (Balinese royal palace or residence). Balinese-Japanese intermarried couples undergo a complex procedure of cultural adaptation and integration in their daily lives, with the usage of honorifics being one aspect of this process. These couples demonstrate the ability to adopt and incorporate honorifics from each other's cultures, creating a unique blend that reflects flexibility and adaptation in cross-cultural language interactions. Despite cultural differences in the usage of honorifics, couples tend to achieve harmony in their marital relationships by integrating elements from both cultures, creating an inclusive and harmonious communication environment. This can be observed in the combination of Balinese names at the beginning of their children's names, indicating the Bali family's caste affiliation, followed by Japanese names. Moreover, the fusion of traditional Japanese and Balinese names can create a unique combination that represents both cultural aspects of the couples involved.

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