

## Ideologically Constructed Intimacy: Personal Address in Japanese Romance Novels

Kyoko Satoh

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate how linguistic resources are used in the ideological construction of intimate relationships in Japanese romance novels. Specifically this paper focuses on address/reference terms used in such novels from the early 2000s and considers how characters choose one form from among several choices. The Japanese language includes a variety of address and personal reference forms, and choosing one among them has implications beyond simple individuation of a person addressed or referred to. This paper traces the selection process and its relationship to shifts in characters' intimacy with each other. Along with choice of address/reference terms, this paper investigates expressions of anxiety connected with choice of address/reference terms, which stand out in contemporary romance novels. Finally, this paper discusses the importance of ritual surrounding address/reference terms, and argues that ritual closeness and descriptions of oppressed feelings are two sides of the same coin, namely the psychological instability that results from a paradigm shift in intimate relationships.

This paper is a part of a larger project investigating romantic love discourses in contemporary Japanese society. Here, Discourse (with a capital D) is used in Gee's (2011) sense of "socially accepted associations among ways of using language, of thinking, valuing, acting, and interaction, in the 'right' places and at the 'right' times with the 'right' objects (associations that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or 'social network')" (p.34). Discourses of romantic love play an important role in Japanese social life today, where there is an increasing tendency for people to marry later or to choose to

remain single (Somusho 2010; Naikakufu 2012), even as they are faced with strong pressure to have a romantic partner. In the society of the early 1980s, most people were already married by their thirties, and love, marriage, and sex were closely interwoven. However, from around the 1990s the strong ties between the trinity of love-marriage-sex began to erode. In contemporary society, we continually receive two contradictory messages. On the one hand, we receive the message that we do not necessarily need to get married: marriage does not always bring us happiness. On the other hand, we also receive the message that we need to have a romantic partner if we are to be healthy in body and mind.

When bombarded with such ambivalent messages, how should people behave? Media representations offer an important perspective on current social ideologies of intimacy. In every season, TV dramas broadcast images of love relationships, and publishers churn out books and magazine articles on how to find an ideal partner. Contemporary romance novels depict idealized relationships in linguistic detail, complete with dialogue. This paper considers novelistic representations in particular, and asks how linguistic patterns of reference contribute to the establishment of intimate relationships between characters in popular romance novels.

This paper begins with some background information on the historical context of romance novels and then describes Japanese address/reference terms and their use in intimate relationships. The analysis examines several excerpts from popular romance novels and considers the linkage they demonstrate between characters' choices of address/reference terms and their unfolding intimate relationships.

## **1. Background**

### **1.1. Romantic Love Discourse in Contemporary Japan**

In Japan, people speak of experiencing “*renai boom*” (“love boom”) or

becoming “love sick” (Ueno 1998). People are urged to find their Mr. or Ms. Right by using the information they obtain from the media (Kusayanagi 2004, 2011; Tanimoto 2008), including romance novels; indeed, the early 2000s saw a surge in the popular consumption of Japanese romance novels.

Although linguistic analysis has been conducted on romance novels from the English publishers Harlequin and Mills & Boon (Radway 1984; Talbot 1995, 1997), similar research on Japanese romance novels is lacking. One exception is the work of Shibamoto-Smith (1999, 2004), who compares Japanese romance novels published between 1971 and 1995 with Harlequin-type Western romance novels in order to elucidate how real love is depicted in those novels. She finds that ideal Japanese protagonists are described in qualitatively different terms from their Western counterparts. In particular, Shibamoto-Smith (1999) points out that the former are less self-revealing. In Japanese romance novels unlike their Western counterparts, expressions of overflowing feelings rarely appear. Furthermore, expressions of the physiological effects of love such as “throbbing of the heart” or “an electric current running throughout her body” are not typically used. This may be due in part to the idea prevalent in Japan that “control of emotions is viewed as a sign of maturity,” as Shibamoto-Smith (1999: 146) points out. However, a more profound reason may lie in the concept of love or the cultural definition of an ideal partner. In Japanese romance novels, a heroine’s main concerns are not about her partner’s personalities, but about his family background. That is, the romance novels in the period surveyed by Shibamoto-Smith continuously send the message that “the ‘container’ must be suitable for true love to flourish” (Shibamoto-Smith 1999: 138).

## **1.2. Ideologies of Romance in Japanese Romance Novels**

The concept of intimate relationships has experienced a paradigm shift from “romantic love ideology” to “pure relationships” (Giddens 1992) in Japan. That

is, the strong trinity of love-marriage-sex has eroded, and the idea of a “pure relationship” has emerged as the ideological model for a romantic relationship. A pure relationship, according to Giddens (1992: 58), is “a close and continuing emotional tie to another” that continues “only in so far as it is thought by both parties to deliver enough satisfaction for each individual to stay within it.” That is, love, which used to be tied to sexuality through marriage, has become tied to sexuality through pure relationship. Replacing marriage with pure relationship has caused a dramatic shift in the way people establish romantic relationships, resulting in delayed marriage or avoidance of marriage. As pointed out by Kusayanagi (2004, 2011) and Tanimoto (2008), among others, the idea of “only you forever” has ebbed. Romantic relationships or love affairs are now understood to occupy only a part of one’s life. Dating or having a sexual relationship, which used to indicate a stable partnership, no longer, guarantees future stability for a couple. The partnership ends when either side feels that its benefits no longer outweigh its costs. The recent trend of engaging in such partnerships seems to raise a new risk: that of psychological instability.

Faced with such instability, and flooded with conflicting media messages on the driving need to find Mr. or Ms. Right while still maintaining their independence, people seek guidelines describing proper behavior. Indeed, this need may be one of the reasons for the current popularity of romance novels.

More than ten years have passed since Shibamoto-Smith’s research. In the novels she examined, the ultimate goal of each story is marriage. To reach the goal, a heroine or a hero strives for a “proper container.” However, in present day Japanese society, marriage is not necessarily a goal for love, which implies that the “proper container” metaphor is no longer adequate, and that updated models of portrayed intimacy may be in order.

### **1.3. The Language of Intimacy**

As pointed out by Ochs and Schieffelin (1989), “beyond the function of communicating referential information, languages are sensitive to the fundamental need of speakers to convey and assess affect” (p.9).

We exploit various linguistic means to communicate feelings of intimacy or affect. One of them is address terms (cf. Ochs and Schieffelin 1989; Caffi and Janney 1994). Brown and Gilman (1960) conducted one of the most well-known research studies on address terms, and they suggested that the T/V system of pronouns is governed by two factors: power and solidarity. The choice of address terms indicates mutual power relationships and feelings toward the people to whom one is referring.

Japanese address/reference terms are also deeply related to the placement of others and the self in social space (Suzuki 1973). One’s choices in this area are governed by various situational considerations. We examine the Japanese systems in a bit more detail below.

### **1.4. Japanese Address/Reference Systems**

In Japanese, grammatical subjects and objects are optional, not obligatory. Whatever is assumed to be active in discourse is not mentioned (cf. Maynard 2009). Thus, the overt expressions of the first person subject/object or the second person subject/object are rare, and the functions of overt expressions were thought to indicate contrast, emphasis, or disambiguation (Kuno 1978; Mizutani 1985, among others).

Lee and Yonezawa (2008) focused on cases where overt subjects/objects appear despite being clearly recoverable from the context and where they could easily have been omitted. Through the observation of face-to-face dyad conversations, Lee and Yonezawa suggest that social indexicality accounts for their overt appearance in Japanese. In particular, they emphasize that “the speaker

increases his/her commitment to the utterance” (p.763) by overt use of such forms whether their function is contrast, emphasis, or emotional attitude. That is, overt expressions are “necessarily inspired by the need to express the properties that are inherent in the expressions” (Lee and Yonezawa 2008: 764).

There are two main types of address/reference terms in Japanese: nouns and pronouns. This paper focuses on the former since the latter rarely appears as direct address/reference terms in the romance novel data this paper deals with. We focus rather on nouns and their modifications. These can take several different types: 1) last name (LN) with or without title (T); 2) first name (FN) with or without T; 3) full name with or without T. Among these possibilities, LN with T and FN without T were found in the data as follows:

Kudo-san: LN+T (*san* is a title used regardless of addressee’s gender or status)

Eto-san: LN+T

Ono-kun: LN+T (*kun* is a title used mainly for men)

Yoshika: FN without T

Izumi: FN without T

When we refer to someone, we choose one form from among hierarchically structured choices. For example, we may use LN+T (Mr. Robinson), FN (Christopher), the standard short form of FN (Chris), or a special nickname (Chrisco) (McConnell-Ginet 2003). In English, people usually choose Chris instead of Christopher to indicate closeness between interlocutors. The same is true of Japanese address/reference expressions. The main factors for choosing one expression from the available choices are status, gender, closeness (Kurokawa 1972; Russell 1981; Takenoya 2003), and formality (Lee and Yonezawa 2008). Among such factors, this paper focuses on closeness and investigates how

intimacy relates to choice of address/reference terms.

## 2. Data

The investigation here focuses on three recent works of popular fiction:

A. *Katte-ni Furuete-ro (Tremble All You Want)* by Risa Wataya (2010)

B. *Naratāju (Naratage)* by Rio Shimamoto (2005/2008)

C. *Hoshi-ni Ochiru (Falling on to a Star)* by Hitomi Kanehara (2007/2011)

All of these books were highly ranked in the year of their publication (according to *Da Vinci* magazine's "Book of the Year" listings) and all center on the romantic relationship between young unmarried male and female protagonists (approximately in their 20s) who are in the process of becoming closer. The authors are all women in their 20s, a demographic in the midst of the age of "pure relationships" (Giddens 1992); and all the authors have gained acclaim as novelists by receiving or being nominated for established literary awards (Akutagawa Prize for Kanehara and Wataya; Shimamoto was a candidate for the prize several times).

From among the several books that were chosen based on these criteria, the three books whose protagonist is a woman were chosen in order to narrow the focus of this paper.

In the following section, we investigate both the description and the dialogue of the novels, and we qualitatively analyze address/reference terms in each excerpt along the emotional development and demonstrated relationships between the characters. In excerpts of descriptions, reference terms used by each protagonist are observed, along with the inner voices of the characters. In dialogue excerpts, we examine the address terms used by both the protagonists and their boyfriend(s).

### 3. Overview of the Data

This section briefly introduces how address/reference terms are used by each of the main characters in the three novels.

In novel A, the protagonist, Yoshika Eto, uses the term “Ni (“two”)” to refer to her boyfriend in the novel’s descriptive sections. Ni is not a nickname, but a symbol used to distinguish between two male characters. In face-to-face interactions she does not call him by any name. It is only at the end of the story that she calls him by his LN+T (Kirishima-kun). Her boyfriend, on the other hand, calls her by her LN+T (Eto-san) at their first encounter and later changes to FN (Yoshika). The developing address patterns for each character can be schematized as follows, with progression over time indicated by arrows:

#### A. *Katte-ni Furuete-ro (Tremble All You Want)*

Protagonist	Description	Ni	→	Ni	→	Kirishima-kun
	Dialogue	$\phi$	→	$\phi$	→	Kirishima-kun
Boyfriend	Dialogue	Eto-san	→	Yoshika	→	Yoshika

In novel B, the protagonist, Izumi Kudo, refers to her boyfriend as Ono-kun (LN+T) both in the descriptive and dialogue parts when she addresses him. Ono-kun, on the other hand, changes the address term he uses for her from Kudo-san (LN+T) to Izumi (FN) at a certain point in the story:

#### B. *Naratāju (Naratage)*

Protagonist	Description	Ono-kun	→	Ono-kun
	Dialogue	Ono-kun	→	Ono-kun
Boyfriend	Dialogue	Kudo-san	→	Izumi

In novel C, the unnamed protagonist refers to her boyfriend as “kare (“he”)

in the descriptive parts throughout the story: in the dialogue parts, neither the protagonist nor her boyfriend uses any address terms to address the other:

C. *Hoshi-ni Ochiru (Falling On to a Star)*

Protagonist	Description	kare
	Dialogue	$\phi$
Boyfriend	Dialogue	$\phi$

#### 4. Reflection of Hierarchical Order

##### 4. 1. FN as Means of Showing Closeness

Takenoya (2003) has suggested that a general hierarchical order applies to one's choice of address/reference terms. Takenoya explores choice factors based on the result of a questionnaire administered to native Japanese speakers. The findings reveal that given the same conditions, there is a high agreement among respondents regarding the hierarchical order of the choices. She notes in particular that in a close relationship between speaker and addressee, FN with/without T is much preferred over LN with/without T; and that titles are hierarchically ordered according to level of politeness as follows:

*san*>*kun* >*chan*(diminutive form)>  $\phi$

The address terms used by male characters in novels A and B follow this same order. That is, the males first call their girlfriend by her LN+T and then shift to FN without title as their relationships deepen.

The existence of the hierarchy is evident in the following scene, where once incompatibility with the hierarchy is detected, the deviation is addressed overtly. In (1), Izumi's boyfriend Ono protests that it is no longer proper to use Ono-kun (LN+T) to address the partner one has been with for three months. He criticizes

Izumi's attitude: <sup>1</sup>

(1) B. *Naratāju* (*Naratage*)

「その呼び方、もうやめろよ。三ヵ月付き合って小野君はないだろう。本当は俺のことなんか好きじゃないくせに困ったときだけ俺に頼るなよ」

Do not call [me] by that name. Don't call [me] Ono-kun in spite of [our] three-month courtship. In reality, [you] do not love me, do [you]? So, do not rely on me only when [you] are in trouble. (p.324)

Ono's anger or irritation is transmitted by his strong and confident tone using negative imperative forms consecutively, which also reveals his belief that calling a partner by his last name and title (Ono-kun) is not a proper way to express closeness as well as his expectation that the addressee, Izumi, should be able to understand and share this belief.

There is no definite rule of choice, and what is proper can differ depending on speakers' communities of practice (cf. McConnell-Ginet 2003). However, Ono's overt protest like this indicates the belief that the choice of a certain address term from among several alternatives can index the depth of love, an ideology that has widespread currency in Japan today, where, as Takenoya (2003) points out, calling an addressee by his/her FN indexes closeness between a speaker and an addressee. Thus, the observation is summarized as follows:

Rule 1 of Romantic Address:

Lovers should call each other by first name.

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<sup>1</sup> Words enclosed in square brackets (“[ ]”) is not overt elements in the original Japanese version.

## 4.2. When to Shift from LN+T to FN and Why

The hierarchical order shows who uses what forms with whom, but it is not yet clear when and why people shift address terms. The romance novel data, however, gives some clues to the answer. Let us turn to some illustrative examples.

### 4.2.1. After a Confession of Love: Becoming Closer Formally

In novel A, the protagonist, Yoshika, agrees to become Ni's girlfriend, giving a positive answer to the following offer from him:

(2) A. *Katte-ni Furuete-ro (Tremble All You Want)*

「なあ、いい加減返事を聞かせてよ。おれと付き合う気があるのか、無いのか」

Well, anyway, please tell [me][your] answer. Whether [you] intend to go out with [me] or not. (p.105)

In the next scene, Ni asks Yoshika whether it is okay to call her by her first name. Receiving a positive answer, he switches the address term from Eto-san (FN+T) to Yoshika (LN):

(3) A. *Katte-ni Furuete-ro (Tremble All You Want)*

「江藤さん、下の名前で呼んでもいい？」

Eto-san, can [I] call you by [your] first name?

「いいよ」

Yes.

「……じゃ、ヨシカ」

Then, Yoshika. (p.111)

Similarly, in novel B the boyfriend (Ono-kun) changes his address term for the protagonist from Kudo-san (LN+T) to Izumi (FN) after she agrees to date him. He also implicitly requests that she should call him by his first name while talking over the phone:

(4) B. *Naratāju* (*Naratage*)

「じゃあ俺のこと、名前で呼んでくれたら切る」

Then, [I] will hang up if [you] call me by [my] first name.

「名前？」

First name? (p.266)

Romance novels often include a scene in which a man asks a woman to begin a relationship with him (Satoh 2012). In these scenes, confession-response seems to operate as an adjacency pair (Schegloff & Sacks 1973: 295-6). Reading such scenes, we soon realize that they have a common feature: the confession-response adjacency pair is followed by a shift of address terms from LN+T to FN. That is, confession followed by a positive answer results in the relationship being conducted on a first-name basis.

The verbal act of addressing the other party is deeply related to the social placement of others and the self (Suzuki 1973). One needs to select an expression from among a number of choices according to estimates of the relationship between two people. The act of calling each other by FN does not always indicate closeness and vice versa; however, our data suggests that calling a partner by his or her FN after receiving a positive answer for confession ritually guarantees a close relationship. We can formulate this as follows:

Rule 2 of Romantic Address:

When people become closer ritually, they change address terms to show that

they are a couple.

#### 4.2.2. At the Emotional Climax: Becoming Closer Emotionally

We must also note here that emotional factors are among the important influences on choice of address/reference terms for one's partner. In novel B, Izumi does not change the address/reference terms she uses with her partner despite the fact that he changes them from LN+T (Kudo-san) to FN(Izumi). She continues using LN+T (Ono-kun), and her asymmetric behavior is criticized by her partner as we saw in (1). Her address/reference terms for him are closely related to her feelings toward him which she describes in a scene following her first date with Ono:

(5) B. *Naratāju* (*Naratage*)

「小野君と一緒にいるのは楽しいよ。だけど、感情が動かないの。良い人だと思ふところを越えられなくて、いつまでたっても新しい恋を始める気になれない」

“[I] enjoy being with Ono-kun. But [my] feelings do not move. [I] think [he] is a good person, but [I] cannot cross the boundary beyond [it]. [I] don't feel like starting a new love affair.” (pp.137-8)

This feeling does not vanish easily, though the relationship between Izumi and Ono-kun deepens as they date and begin a physical relationship. In (6), their non-reciprocal use of address terms is observed. Izumi calls her boyfriend by his LN+T: the boyfriend calls her by FN:

(6) B. *Naratāju* (*Naratage*)

「なにかを教える仕事は向いていると思うよ。小野君には練習のときにもだいぶお世話になったし」

「だけど泉に教えるのは緊張していたから、あんまり上手くできなかった気がする」

“[I] think [you] are suited for teaching something. [I] was taken care by Ono-kun very much at [our] practice time.”

“But [I] feel nervous when [I] teach Izumi. So, [I] feel [I] couldn’t teach well.” (p.270)

As (6) indicates, intimate partners may choose to resist the first and second rules of romantic address, even if they consider themselves to be lovers. In this case, an intimate relationship may not be synonymous with close emotional connection. This may be summarized as follows:

Rule 3 of Romantic Address:

Even though they consider themselves a couple by virtue of the confession-acceptance process, lovers will continue calling each other by their last name if they do not feel emotional closeness to each other.

The implication of this rule is that people call each other by their first names if they feel that they are emotionally close to one another.

In novel A, the correlation between emotional closeness and choice of address/reference terms is clearly depicted. The protagonist Yoshika does not use any address terms when she talks to her boyfriends in the novel’s dialogue. This is not unnatural in Japanese conversation where grammatical expressions that refer to subjects and objects are optional. What is peculiar about this data is the fact that she does not use the names of her male companions in the descriptive parts, either. She calls one man Ichi (meaning No.1) and the other man Ni (meaning No.2):

(7) A. *Katte-ni Furuete-ro (Tremble All You Want)*

でも私はイチがよかった。ニなんていらぬ、イチが欲しかった。

But I wanted to be Ichi's girlfriend. [I] don't want Ni. [I] wanted Ichi. (p.5)

Ichi's name seems to stem from his family name Ichinomiya, but there seems to be no reason for her to call the other man Ni except that he occupies the second position as a candidate for being her boyfriend.

Even after Ni shifts the address term he uses with the protagonist from Eto-san (LN+T) to Yoshika (FN), Yoshika continues using Ni to refer to him in the descriptive parts:

(8) A. *Katte-ni Furuete-ro (Tremble All You Want)*

私を抱くニの腕に力がこもり、彼の高揚が伝わってくるのが、ぼんやりとうれしい。

「…おれは肝心なところでいつも焦って、ヨシカを困らせてばかりだったな」

[I] feel Ni holds me firmly. [I] feel his excitement. [I] feel vaguely happy.

“...I was always hasty in important situations, and [I]’ve kept putting Yoshika in a spot.” (p.113)

At this point, the protagonist Yoshika allows Ni to hold her, but she does not feel completely happy: her happiness is vague, dim, and distant. In this situation, she continues calling him Ni.

In the dialogue parts, Yoshika continues avoiding his name when she talks to him, even when overt expression of his name would be natural:

(9) A. *Katte-ni Furuete-ro (Tremble All You Want)*

「うん、大丈夫」私は顔をあげた。「でもよかった。いまの言葉で

私、決めた」

“No, [I]’m okay.” I raised [my] face. “But that’s right. By [your] words right now, I have decided.” (p.115)

In the dialogue part of Yoshika in (9), she could easily have expressed his name: “by FN’s words right now, I have decided.” However, she does not do so. Her behavior is closely related to her distant feelings toward Ni. Immediately after this, Yoshika confesses that her mind is on a man other than Ni.

However, at the end of the novel A, Yoshika, finally changes her habits: she confesses her real feelings to Ni and calls him by his name for the first time. As the story proceeds, the protagonist’s feelings gradually change. Ni’s role in her life grows, and he transforms from a dimly shaped person to a clearly cut man of importance. When these feelings reach the climax, she calls him by his name:

(10) A. *Katte-ni Furuete-ro (Tremble All You Want)*

「絶対にうまくやる、絶対にうまくやるから、これからも愛して」  
肩のところが濡れて背広の色が変わっている霧島くんに抱きついた。

「霧島くん、ねえ、怒ってるの」

「いや。ほっとしてる」

“[I] will do well. [I] will absolutely do well. So, please love [me] from now on, too.”

[I] flung [my] arms around Kirishima-kun’s shoulders where the color of [his] suit changed from the tears.

“Kirishima-kun, well, are [you] angry?”

“No, [I] feel relieved.” (p.162)

At this point, Yoshika uses Kirishima-kun (LN+T) instead of Ni. Addressing him with LN+T might not be a proper choice in terms of reciprocity, since he calls her

by her FN. However, her change at this point implies that she has taken a significant step toward acknowledging the closeness in their relationship. This observation may be summarized as follows:

Rule 4 of Romantic Address:

When people feel that they are becoming closer emotionally to their partners, they shift address terms to indicate that closeness.

### 5. Oppressed Feeling and Distance

Interestingly, in novel C, neither the present boyfriend nor the former boyfriend of the protagonist is given a name. The former boyfriend is referred to as “otoko” (meaning “the man”), and the present boyfriend is called “kare” (meaning “he or him”). Although “kare” is simply the third person pronoun, the word in novel C is not used in that way as the following excerpt shows:

(11) C. *Hoshi-ni Ochiru (Falling on to a Star)*

電話の男は、よく私を思って泣くと言う。私も彼を思って、よく泣く。

The man on the phone says that [he] often cries thinking of me. I, too, cry when thinking of him. (p.26)

In (11), “kare (“he”)” is not used as a referential pronoun whose antecedent is “the man,” as the conventional rules would predict. Rather, it refers to her present boyfriend. It is used as if it is a proper noun.

Unlike the situation in novels A and B, the protagonist in novel C loves “kare.” In the descriptive parts of the story, she demonstrates strong feelings for “kare” from the beginning, and the two apparently have a relationship that is physically and emotionally fulfilling for both: they dine at fancy restaurants, talk a lot, stay at night at the protagonist’s apartment, and so on. So, what prevents

her from calling his name?

The most peculiar characteristic of this story is that the protagonist does not directly express her feelings for her beloved. The story centers on her delusion that her boyfriend might not love her without any clear evidence of his betrayal. Though the descriptive parts are full of her oppressed feelings, she does not discuss her desires and anxieties about their relationship, their future, or anything else with him.

She ponders at length what she should write when she emails him. Her inner speech suggests that the content of her emails should not be anything that demands a reply from him or places a “burden” on him:

(12) C. *Hoshi-ni Ochiru (Falling on to a Star)*

私は彼の前で取り乱してはいけないし、泣いてもいけないし、一緒にいたいと言ってもいけない。辛いとも、悲しいとも、寂しいとも、愛してるとも、言ってはいけない。重いからだ。

[I] cannot behave heedlessly in front of him, [I] cannot cry, or say [I] want to be with [him]. [I] cannot say [I] feel pain, or that [I]’m sad, or lonely. [I] cannot say [I] love [him]. Because [it] becomes [his] burden. (p.33)

She makes every effort to avoid bothering him. Thus, although she wants to communicate with him, it is not easy for her to send him an email:

(13) C. *Hoshi-ni Ochiru (Falling on to a Star)*

夜の十時を過ぎた頃、メールを入れようかどうか、迷い始めた。彼には彼の事情がある。

After ten o’clock in the evening, [I] started to wonder whether [I] should send [him] an email. He has his own reasons. (p.37)

In the last part of the story, he proposes marriage to her. In this situation, uneasiness takes the place of her earlier pleasure:

(14) C. *Hoshi-ni Ochiru* (*Falling on to a Star*)

本当に幸せな時間で、その時間の終焉が怖くて仕方ない。… 本気で言っていたのだろうか。… 彼は本当に、私を愛しているのだろうか。

[I'] m having a very happy time and [I] cannot help feeling scared to think that that time will end. ... Did [he] mean [it]? ... Does he really love me? (p. 175)

Here, too, her anxiety is not expressed openly to her partner. It is confined to her inner voice. Her attitude contrasts sharply with the dialogue observed in (10) where the protagonist bursts into tears and expresses her feeling openly. Novel C, then, shows another form of establishing an intimate relationship:

Rule 5 of Romantic Address:

When people refrain from expressing their emotions and keep a certain distance between them, this restraint results in a no-address-term relationship.

## 6. Summary

This paper has traced the selection process of address/reference terms alongside the shifts in intimacy of the characters in contemporary Japanese romance novels. The examination has suggested the following general rules for romantic address in Japanese:

1. Lovers should call each other by first name.
2. When people become closer ritually, they change address terms to show that they are a couple.

3. Even though they consider themselves a couple by virtue of the confession-acceptance process, lovers will continue calling each other by their last name if they do not feel emotional closeness to each other.
4. When people feel that they are becoming closer emotionally to their partners, they shift address terms to indicate that closeness.
5. When people refrain from expressing their emotions and keep a certain distance between them, this restraint results in a no-address-term relationship.

As Ochs and Schieffelin (1989) mention, we tend to “seek out affective information from significant others in their social environment to better understand and respond to uncertain information” (p.21). Address/reference terms, then, can be a useful indicator for evaluating mutual distance.

Rule 1 of romantic address says that we can consider a man and a woman calling by FN each other as a couple. However, there are some exceptions. Rules 3 and 4 suggest that emotional closeness is more closely related to the establishment of first-name address than physical closeness is.

Rules 2 and 5 are particularly interesting. Rule 2 mentions the importance of rituality, and Rule 5 is about the correlation between distance and a no-address-term relationship. These are two sides of the same coin – one that reflects the contemporary romantic ideologies of Japanese society. Because of the recent paradigm shift in intimate relationships, no single activity guarantees that two people are a couple. Because of this situation, people resort to language in order to receive affective hints and information from their partners: what is told to whom and how it is told. At the same time, verbosity is carefully avoided so as not to impinge on a partner’s physical and emotional territory, since such invasions risk resulting in the end of romantic relationship.

This analysis concludes by pointing out that the language of intimacy is not

universal. We are bound by society's rules regarding what feelings are appropriate to have, show, and express. As this discussion demonstrates, even intimate feelings are constructed and represented ideologically through available linguistic devices.

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