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How Forms of Address Shape Emotional Responses to Praise and Reprimand: A Study of Japanese Junior High and High School Students

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Abstract

This study examined how teachers' forms of address—*san*, *chan/kun*, or no honorific—affect students' emotional responses to praise and reprimand. A vignette-based questionnaire was administered to 261 Japanese junior high and high school students. The results showed that when students were addressed with *san*, the most gender-neutral and respectful of the three forms, they reported more positive emotions and fewer negative emotions than when addressed with *chan/kun* or no honorific, both of which are relatively more informal. However, these effects interacted with how participants were typically addressed by their teachers in everyday school life. Such effects were not observed among students who were usually addressed without honorifics, suggesting that the social meaning of forms of address may be shaped by prior experience. Teachers' choices of forms of address may therefore represent an important aspect of classroom communication.