5 Meet and Greet: Nominal Address and Introductions in Intercultural Communication at International Conferences

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Introduction

The way we address one another – nominal address such as first names, last names and titles, or pronominal address, the use of informal (T) versus formal (V) 2nd person pronouns such as the French tu and vous ‘you’, respectively – is fundamental in marking social relations and encodes human relationships. This pilot study examines nominal address in intercultural communication among academics, focusing specifically on address and introduction practices at international conferences. Address here encompasses use of titles (Ti), first names (FN), last names (LN), and combinations of these in the introduction of self and of another person as well as introduction of self by another.

International conferences present a valuable research site for research on intercultural pragmatics given the unique combination of potentially counter-vailing factors at play. Such factors include the identity of who is being introduced, the conference as formal activity, the potential for status differences among participants who are at the same time also academic peers, as well as the effect of differences in linguistic and cultural background, and in age. Here we consider the effect of some of these factors, both in the first language and in English as conference lingua franca. We use existing intracultural models of address and politeness to better understand our results in an important intercultural context.
Overview and Issues

The overwhelming majority of published research on address practices has been on intracultural address, i.e. within the same language or cultural community, while studies of intercultural address are rare, e.g. Schüpbach et al. (2007) and Clyne (2009). The international conference has become a key site for intercultural contact and exchanges among academics from around the globe. On meeting, they necessarily take part in introductions – of themselves and others – and have to decide how to do so, whether in their own language or, as is increasingly common, in English.

Every language offers a variety of linguistic means for the expression of a speaker’s personal and social orientation to others through address, including the appropriate use of nominal address terms. The nominal terms that we focus on here, e.g. first names and titles, can be put on a scale of ‘social distance’, considered as the overarching principle that guides speakers in their choice of address forms (Clyne et al., 2009). Social distance is a multi-dimensional concept involving degrees of affect, solidarity and familiarity (cf. Clyne et al., 2009: 35; Svennevig, 1999).

In any interaction, interlocutors position themselves in relation to the other. We can consider the self as a social construction which is performed or presented. The presentation of self can be regarded as ‘a claim to a particular social position’, and the speaker seeks to meet the expectations of the position they have claimed (Svennevig, 1999: 23). Participants in a conversation should act so as to project their preferred face, or self-image, and to ensure that the face of other participants is not threatened (Goffman, 1967). In positioning themselves in relation to one another, individuals use positive and negative politeness strategies which enhance the interlocutors’ positive or negative face. Brown and Levinson (1987) differentiate between negative face, the ‘want’ not to be imposed upon by others, and positive face, the ‘want’ to be approved of by others.

In an encounter, a choice of address mode is made, or a transition to another address mode is initiated, on the basis of a set of six principles, as first established by Clyne et al. (2009). The address model they developed is considered here as providing a useful framework for understanding the results of our investigation of intercultural communication in the academic conference setting. The model was formulated as a result of a comparative project on variation and change in intracultural modes of address in French, German, Swedish and English, based on focus groups, interviews, chat groups and participant observation, while also taking into account national variation for all of the languages (except French). Below we set out the principles and a series of questions that illustrate how they work:

P1. *Familiarity principle:*
Do I know this person?
P2. **Maturity principle:**
Do I perceive this person to be an adult?

P3. **Relative age principle:**
Do I perceive this person to be considerably older than me? Or younger?

P4. **Network membership principle:**
Is this person a regular and accepted member within a group I belong to?

P5. **Social identification principle:**
Do I perceive this person to be similar to or different from me?

P6. **Address mode accommodation principle:**
If this person uses T (or V), or a T-like (or V-like) address with me, will I do the same? (Clyne *et al.*, 2009: 158)

The principles relate to absolute assessment of the interlocutor (PP1, 2 and 4), to assessment of the interlocutor in relation to oneself (PP3 and 5), or to address mode per se (P6). Most of the address data collected and analysed here concern the principles of Network membership (P4) and Social identification (P5) and to a lesser extent Relative age (P3).

Among the factors influencing the operation of these principles are the specific address rules of a particular language or culture, the address preferences of a specific social network and/or the individual, as well as contextual factors such as domains, institutions and medium of communication. Together, principles, factors and scales (see below, for example) provide a useful framework for deciding where to place an interlocutor on the social distance continuum in relation to oneself and thus which address form(s) to use.

Nominal address terms can be placed on a social distance scale (or scale of relative formality), ranging from more formal V-like forms, i.e. those that mark high social distance between interlocutors, to more informal T-like forms, i.e. those that mark low social distance between interlocutors. On such a scale, use of title and last name would, for instance, mark [+ social distance], and use of first name would mark [− social distance]. English, for example, unlike French, does not have T and V pronouns, and uses T-like nominal forms, such as first name, ‘mate’ and ‘dear’, and V-like forms such as title + last name, ‘Sir’ or ‘Madam’ to express lower and higher social distance, respectively (Clyne *et al.*, 2009: 157).

**Data and Overall Results**

The database for this pilot study consists of 195 questionnaires collected at three international conferences held in Hamburg in Germany (bilingualism conference, 97 respondents), in Gothenburg in Sweden (pragmatics conference, 65 respondents) and Melbourne in Australia (medical conference, 33 respondents). A comparison of different academic disciplines is not possible
here given the relatively small number of responses from the medical conference. The 195 delegates who responded to our questionnaire come from over 40 countries and represent close to 50 different language backgrounds, including mother tongue bilinguals (here referring to those who have entered more than one first language on the questionnaire). In the first instance, we make a distinction between first (L1) and second (L2) language speakers of English in order to identify any general differences in behaviour. However, given the high degree of linguistic variability in our sample, we decided to focus our analysis on the more language-specific behaviour of some of our respondents at a macro level according to three regional cultural groupings (see below for specific detail). There are also approximately three times as many women as men (141 and 52, respectively, with two unidentified), but initial surveying of results found little difference between genders. For this reason, gender is not treated as a variable here. Consideration is, however, given to the effect of age on introduction patterns, and its potential interaction with language and cultural background. Slightly more than half (109) are aged between 30 and 50 years. The two other age groups are (a) under 30 and (b) over 50 (45 and 41 respondents, respectively).

The questionnaire was designed to gather information about the respondents’ age, sex, country of origin and of residence, and language experience. It also contained specific questions about introductions in conference settings. We were interested in collecting information about everyone’s experience in English, and for second language speakers of English, we also asked about their experience in their first language. Three basic questions (concerning Principles 3, 4 and 5 above) were asked about conference interactions where English is the common language or where the speakers use their first language: How do you introduce yourself to others? How do you introduce others? How do others introduce you? For each question, four choices, including three address options, were given: (a) ‘by first name’; (b) ‘by first and last name’; (c) ‘by title and last name’; and (d) ‘other’ (with a space for comments). We also provided further space at the bottom of the page for extra comments elaborating on the three questions.

While most of our respondents chose one of the three address forms indicated, the answers to ‘other’ and the open questions provided us with a wide scope of different and combined address alternatives as well as some very interesting additional information. For the purposes of this study, however, and in order to provide a clearer picture in the figures below, all answers were collated as summarised in Table 5.1, following Hook (1984): any answer that mentioned first name only (FN), at least as a possibility, was coded as ‘close’ in terms of social distance, any that mentioned last name in any way but without title (‘FN + LN’ or ‘FN + LN or other’) were coded as ‘neutral’, and all answers that mentioned Title at least as a possibility were coded as ‘distant’. Answers which did not fit in this scheme, e.g. were left blank, were coded as ‘not applicable’ (n/a).
Overall, where English is the common language, the most frequent type of introduction in all three situations is a combination of FN and LN. However, as is evident in Figure 5.1, respondents tend to be more distant or formal when introducing others compared to how they introduce themselves, or how they expect to be introduced by a colleague. The clearest asymmetry occurs between how people introduce themselves and how they would introduce a colleague in the same context. In the first situation, use of FN-only (25%), is relatively common, while titles are almost always avoided. In the latter situation, titles can be used, and use of FN-only is much less likely. The third situation, how respondents expect others to introduce them, falls in between the other two in terms of closeness–distance.

The following quotations, from an Australian and a British informant, respectively, illustrate the asymmetry between how respondents introduce others and how they expect to be introduced by others, and point to the fact that informants do not seem to be overly concerned if introductory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address form</th>
<th>Relative social distance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FN-only</td>
<td>Close</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FN + LN, FN + LN or other</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title in any combination</td>
<td>Distant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other possibilities</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5.1** Coding of relative social distance

![Figure 5.1 Patterns of introductions: First meeting, in English, regardless of first language (195 respondents)](image-url)
patterns are non-reciprocal. (In each quotation, the informant is identified with the following details: country of birth, sequence number, gender, age group, first language [L1] – in the case of multilinguals more than one L1 is indicated.)

I tend to refer to one’s title when introducing others, but I don’t expect others to do the same with me. (Au2, Male, 50–50, English)

Have no strong ‘expectations’ as to how I’d be introduced, don’t really mind being addressed differently [from how he would address others]. (UK3, Male, under 50, English)

Linguistic and Regional Macrocultural Effects on Nominal Address in Introductions

Introductions when English is used in a conference context

The study also investigated whether there are differences in preferred introductions depending on the respondents’ linguistic and cultural background. As already noted, given the very large number of countries and first languages identified by the respondents, we decided to group as many as possible into specific regional macrocultural groupings and analyse the results for those informants accordingly. While such groupings may contain many different languages, longstanding linguistic and cultural contact and areal diffusion favours shared linguistic structures and practices within them. Three such groupings of approximately even size were identified for our purposes: (a) English-speaking with 39 respondents; (b) Central Europe with 45 respondents; and (c) Northern Europe with 34 respondents. In total, 118 of 195 subjects were included in the macroregional analysis (the remaining 77 who did not come from any of these regions were excluded). These three groupings were inspired by Galtung’s (1985) work on intellectual styles based on such linguistic practices as turn-taking patterns (including turn maintenance and turn appropriation), turn length (including clustering of speech acts), degree of directness in speech act realisations, and predominance of positive or negative politeness. This approach, with the same set of groupings, had previously proved meaningful in a study of English as a lingua franca in the workplace (Clyne, 1994), where the issue of central and peripheral macrocultural membership also arose. We follow this approach here, without further discussion.

Figure 5.2 shows the results of our responses for the three macrocultural groupings. Central Europe includes as core Croatia, Hungary, Austria, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Slovakia and on the periphery Switzerland and Germany, while Northern Europe includes the Netherlands, Denmark,
Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Dutch-speaking parts of Belgium. The results for subjects of English-speaking background include the following countries: UK, Ireland, USA, Canada and Australia.

Figure 5.2 indicates that the tendency to use FN-only, at least sometimes, in self-introductions in English is greatest among L1 speakers of English (ENG, 33%). When introducing others, results for all three groups show an increased degree of distance or formality, with the Central Europeans (CE) being the most formal; 27% of them report potential use of titles in this context. The English L1 speakers remain the most informal when introducing others in the sense that they employ a higher level of FN, but the Northern Europeans (NE) report the lowest incidence of title use here (12%), and even then almost always only as an option alongside title-less introductions. With respect to how respondents expect to be introduced by others, the Central Europeans again remain the most formal, seen in the greatest expectation of a title (11%).

Use of FN is predominantly a practice that can be linked to interactions in English (cf. Figure 5.3, below), and is in particular favoured by native speakers of English. Comments from our informants – below from a German and an American – lend qualitative support to the notion that use of FN is more typical of English language interactions and of L1 English speakers:

I am often surprised that many colleagues from English-speaking countries introduce themselves by their first name only, although they
are much superior than I am, as they have many important titles, have published many papers and books etc. To them it does not seem to make a difference whether you are ‘just’ a student or already a famous researcher. They always see you as an important member of research and if you are young often as someone bringing in new ideas. (G30, Female, 30–50, German)

In English, I will sometimes also introduce others by first name only. (US1, Male, 30–50, German/English, lives in Germany)

**Introductions when informant’s first language is used in a conference context**

Turning to the responses of the entire sample (195 subjects) in relation to the respondents’ reported use in their first language (including English as L1), there is an overall tendency towards more formality and distance than in English as shared conference language. While FN + LN remains by far the most common pattern (ranging from 74% in self-introduction to 59% for the introduction of others), there is a tendency to use FN less (ranging from 6% for introducing others to 11% when being introduced by others) and titles more, as seen in Figure 5.3, when compared to the results in Figure 5.1.

We note the greater frequency of other (‘n/a’) answers in L1 introductions, as compared to English as a lingua franca (see Figure 5.1): it appears that in the former there is greater likelihood that the respondent does not explicitly introduce her/himself or others and does not expect to be introduced

![Figure 5.3 Patterns of introductions in L1 (195 respondents)](image-url)
explicitly by others. Such behaviour can be understood as a kind of face-saving strategy that avoids marking relative status or uncertainty. Instead, other means are used, such as showing the conference name tag (which was not explicitly investigated in our questionnaire, but commented upon by some respondents) or by using vague introductions without direct naming, e.g. 'This is my colleague'.

In a preliminary test of differences in the effect of more specific linguistic/cultural background, in Figure 5.4 we have singled out L1 introductions in the two European macrocultural regional groupings under consideration (comparable results for the L1 English-speaking grouping can be seen in Figure 5.2). The results below confirm a clear tendency towards more formality and distance among the Central Europeans (CE) when interacting in their L1 – compared to L1 Northern Europeans (and L1 English in Figure 5.2) – seen in increased use of titles and a general unwillingness to use FN-only introductions. Northern Europeans (NE), by way of contrast, make some limited use of FN in all three contexts, and generally avoid titles, especially in introductions involving the self. Moreover, there appears to be little difference in behaviour or expectation for Northern Europeans when the self is involved – either in self-introduction or in introduction of self by another. For Central Europeans (as well as for L1 English speakers and for L2 English speakers overall), self-introduction is clearly less formal than introduction of self by another, while for both groupings (and English L1) the introduction of another involves the greatest degree of formal behaviour.

Figure 5.4 Distribution of introductions (%) in L1 (central and northern Europeans only)
Macrocultural and linguistic background, individual awareness and practice

The following comments from a Belgian and an Australian respondent clearly show that the linguistic and cultural background of the colleague is taken into account when introducing him/her:

This depends on the other person. I would introduce him/her with title and last name when s/he is German. (B1, Female, 30–50, Dutch)

I worry about how to address people in English. It seems too pompous to me to use titles but I also know this is more acceptable in Europe, so I just avoid address terms or code-switch into German and use ‘Sie’ and titles. (Au1, Female, under 30, English)

Here the speaker’s sensitivity to an interlocutor’s L1 and cultural background enables her to adopt different strategies, such as code-switching, to resolve a potential intercultural problem. While the differences in expressed level of formality between introductions in English and in other languages can be accounted for by an awareness of cultural differences – a variant of Principle 5 (Social identification) – our qualitative data also demonstrate that the choice of introductions is governed by a number of interacting concerns, such as the age and status of the other person, the situational context, and personal relationships already established between interlocutors. In addition, there is a tendency towards mirroring the behaviour of the interlocutor, as is illustrated by the following quotations from a Canadian and a Belgian respondent, respectively:

My usage depends in part on my perception of norms used by the others. (C3, Female, over 50, English)

I generally try to pick up/mirror the strategies used by other people, e.g. try to ‘copy’ the way in which someone introduced him-herself when introducing him/her to others. (B7, Female, under 30, Dutch)

Not all informants, however, avoid a mode of address or wish to mirror patterns used by their interlocutor. The following comments from a Dutch and an Italian respondent reveal that introductions (of self and other) can for some also be guided by personal choice, being a specifically ‘T(-like)’ or a ‘V(-like)’ person, and are non-negotiable:

I never never use title (+last name). (Nl5, Female, 30–50, Dutch)

I don’t like using title when addressing people (except for seniors) and I don’t like to be addressed by title by others. (It3, Female, age not disclosed, Italian)
Comments such as these demonstrate that at least some informants dislike being addressed in a certain way, in contrast to those L1 speakers of English quoted in the Data section who comment that they do not mind if there are address asymmetries.

The Effect of Respondents’ Age on Nominal Address Patterns in Introductions

Introductions when English is used in a conference context

The results in Figure 5.5 present the impact across the entire sample (195 subjects) of respondents’ age, regardless of first language, on the use of FN or FN + LN or combinations involving a title in English. When we compare self-introduction and introduction of self by others with introduction of others, we see that respondents, regardless of age, are more willing to expect FN-only for themselves. At the same time, the decreasing age of the respondent is clearly inversely correlated with increased use of FN-only – in the introduction of others or of self by others. But interestingly those in the 30–50 group (28%) are just as likely as those below 30 (29%) to use FN-only in self-introductions – a sign that this informal pattern has been acceptable in English (as first or second language) for some time – in contrast to other languages (see below). The use of FN by those over 50 in any context is well below overall average results. Conversely, this same group is much more

![Figure 5.5 Patterns of introductions in English, according to age, regardless of first language (195 respondents)](image)
likely (85%) to insist on using FN + LN in self-introductions, well above the sample average (72%).

With respect to the use of titles in introductions, there is a large divide between respondents over 50 and those below that age cut-off, with the former showing much greater propensity to both use and expect titles. Overall, titles are used very little for self-introductions. On the other hand, the use of title combinations is notable for its frequency when introducing others (19% overall) – especially as respondents’ age increases. The frequency is 11% among the under 30s, 16% among the 30–50 year olds and 38% in the over-50 age group. With respect to introduction by others, titles are rarely reported by respondents under 30 (2%) or between 30 and 50 (6%). By contrast, more than a quarter of the 50+ group (27%) report the use of titles in the same context. Such a difference is not unexpected and reflects two different trends: (1) more traditional address patterns that favour more formal introductions associated with titles are more likely to be maintained by older respondents; and (2) younger respondents still on their way to establishing their careers are much less likely to have formal titles themselves and have less experience of using them.

Introductions when respondents’ first language is used in a conference context

When we consider the same types of age-related interactions given in Figure 5.5, the effect of L1 is marked (see Figure 5.6) – in particular on the reduced use of FN-only when compared to introductions in English as shared

![Figure 5.6 Patterns of introductions in L1 according to age (195 respondents)](image)
language (see Figure 5.5). An age-related effect on FN use is discernible, but the differences between generations are much less marked in L1 than in English only. Moreover the generational divide here is earlier – at 30 – which suggests that a shift to more informal address through FN-only is more recent and less developed in languages other than English. Such a finding is consistent with previously noted observations by respondents about the greater informality and more limited use of titles in English compared to many other languages (although not all: titles are used even less in the Scandinavian languages, as confirmed by our findings here for Northern European and by Clyne et al., 2009: 98–99).

In Figure 5.6 we see that the youngest respondents (those under 30) are also less likely to introduce themselves with FN + LN (67%) than those aged 30–50 (77%) or over 50 (74%). On the other hand, when compared to the 50+ group, they are as likely to use it when introducing others (<30: 56%; >50: 56%), and more likely to accept it when being introduced (<30: 64%; 30–50: 70%; >50: 59%). These differences correlate with the increased use of titles in introductions as age increases, especially evident again among those over 50. In contrast to the two other age groups, the under-30 age group also shows a greater willingness to be identified by FN-only when being introduced by others, rather than in self-introduction. We consider this to be a sign of sensitivity to reduced relative status marked by such things as a lesser likelihood of having a formal title or doctoral qualification (e.g. as postgraduate students compared to professors).

Discussion

Predictable variation and patterning across the three introduction scenarios

The overall differences in address practices for introducing self and others, and expectations about how to be addressed by others, indicate that respondents are concerned about protecting the other person’s integrity and negative face needs in the context of international conferences. They achieve this through the use of more formal patterns, e.g. titles, that highlight a certain degree of social distance, thereby not imposing on the other. When introducing themselves, however, they are much more likely to signal low social distance and invite a closer relationship through more informal address. In other words, the reported asymmetries in self and other introductions display a concern for the negative face of the other and positive face of self.

Titles are mentioned most often in questions relating to the introduction of others – a sign of acceptable status marking. They are least likely in self-introductions (see Data section) – a sign that the speaker should be modest
and avoid marking potential status differences. This pattern is irrespective of whether the introduction is done in English as a conference language or in the informant’s L1. However, our results indicate that non-native speakers of English tend to reduce the use and expectation of titles in English – a clear indication of their own acquired sensitivity to the less distancing and more informal address norms in English than those that occur in many other languages, or cultural areas, such as Central Europe.

Despite consistent differences across our three macrocultural groupings, such as the very obvious shift in the Central European group towards more formality through increased title use when asked to report on introductions in their L1, the overall differences across the three address scenarios remain largely the same, regardless of grouping and use of L1 and/or English: as already noted, respondents tend to be the least formal when they introduce themselves, clearly more formal when introducing others, while the introductions by others generally fall in between these two. This regular patterning across categories highlights that the same type of politeness concerns are also at play when the interaction takes place in the respondent’s L1. The only partial exception to this patterning is found among the Northern Europeans, for whom introduction of self by another is very similar to self-introduction in terms of relative formality. In addition, the fact that the Northern European group does not display a particularly marked shift as compared to their reported behaviour in English when interacting in their L1 towards greater formality, e.g. through greater title use, is an illustration of the relatively informal to neutral address practices that characterise Scandinavians in particular and, to a somewhat lesser degree, the Dutch.

With respect to age of respondent, our results show a strong correlation for the entire sample: increased age involves increased formality overall; older subjects (>50) are more likely to employ and expect more formal modes of address, including titles, regardless of language used (English as conference language or L1). However, with respect specifically to self-introduction, there is a marked difference in behaviour among 30–50 year olds according to language type: they are just as likely as those under 30 to use FN in English, in stark contrast to L1 – a sign of accommodation to perceived norms in English in favour of such use in that specific context.

### Pluricentricity

While the macroregional groupings we use here have been found to be reliable markers of shared linguistic practice (e.g. Clyne, 1994; Galtung, 1985), we are aware that they can also contain within them considerable variation in address routines between nations using the same pluricentric language (see also Kretzenbacher et al., 2013). The main example referred to in the questionnaires is the greater use of titles in Austria compared to Germany.
(cf. Clyne et al., 2009: 139–141; Kretzenbacher, 2011: 77–78), as shown in the following quotations from a German and a Polish/Austrian respondent:

I am living in Austria since February 2007 and there is something different which may be important to your topic. In Austria, the titles are much more important than in Germany and the mentioning of titles in public is very common. ‘Herr Professor X’, ‘Herr Magister X’ [Magister = person with four-year degree]. I am not familiar with Austrian conferences but it could be that this style is somewhat reflected in academia too. (G32, Male, 30–50, German)

In Austria, we often introduce ourselves with title + FN + LN, whereas in Germany (less-status conscious) only the name is used. (P5, Female, over 50, Polish, Polish-Austrian origin, living in Austria)

**Contextual factors and principles**

The academic conference can be regarded as an institution providing its own contextual rules for address. As noted briefly in the introduction, on the one hand, the conference is a formal academic activity. There are status differences between the participants, who vary in age, institutional seniority and international reputation. On the other hand, all conference participants can be considered as peers with an underlying sense of solidarity and even egalitarianism.

The results presented here enable us to see how contextual factors can influence the use of the particular principles described in the Overview and Issues section. According to the Social identification principle (P5), the consideration of all conference participants as peers makes the use of titles inappropriate, as the following Belgian respondent makes clear:

I perceive conference colleagues as equals, which means I don’t need to signal status differences, I would use title and name when presenting a colleague to students. (B4, Male, 30–50, French + Dutch)

The Social identification principle (P5) appears, however, to be modified by issues of seniority. For instance, a recently acquired title can be used to introduce its bearer, thus signifying increased seniority:

If somebody had just received their title, I might introduce them with the title. (UK8, Female, 30–50, English)

The informant CZ2 (Female, under 30, Czech speaker) comments that, both in English and in Czech, she would introduce colleagues her own age by FN + LN, but ‘older/more respectable people’ by Ti + LN.
Conclusion: Contribution of this Study

There is no doubt that international academic conferences are particularly valuable sites for address research, given the solidary and yet formal context, and the underlying importance of status and hierarchy in academia (even in English-speaking countries). These same conferences are also noteworthy because of the opportunities for intercultural contact and communication. As a consequence, we have also been able to consider the role of face and to apply a set of principles arising from a previous comparative study of intracultural address to better understand reported behaviour in this intercultural institutional context – in respondents’ first language as well as in English as the conference lingua franca.

Overall, the results of our pilot study have usefully cast light on the effects of and interactions between: (a) English as L1 and conference language, (b) different cultural backgrounds and first languages, and (c) age, on perceived and expected modes of address in the conference setting. All these elements are seen to have an effect on address in introductions. In particular, the results presented here highlight the potential – among non-native speakers of English – for English language routines and patterns to be influenced by differing cultural norms operating in other languages and cultural areas. At the same time, our results also show some sensitivity to English L1 norms – particularly the heightened use of first name-only address, when academics from different cultural backgrounds meet at international conferences. Our restricted macrocultural analysis is seen to be useful in confirming that L1 speakers of languages other than English do not behave uniformly in their first language or in English. Finally, regardless of language, age is seen to be a useful marker of the relative status of respondents and their interlocutors as expressed through address patterns: the oldest respondents, most likely to achieve higher academic standing over an extended career, are least likely to use FN-only but most likely to use and expect formal titles.

References


