

The Use of Address Forms in Chinese Political Discourse: Analyzing the 1998 Taipei Mayoral Debates*

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ABSTRACT

Analyzing video-taped data from two televised 1998 Taipei mayoral debates, this study has found that there were differences in the use of address forms between the two debates and among the three debaters. While the incumbent mayor always addressed his rivals with a surname (SN)+general title in both debates, the two challengers shifted from the more deferential address forms, which tend to include the official title, to the more distant and less respectful surname (SN)+general title or the full name (FN) to address or refer to the incumbent mayor in the second debate. This strategic choice of address forms implies that compared with the first debate, the second debate, which took place only four days before election day, had become more antagonistic and confrontational in nature. In addition, a debater's choice of address form marks his communicative style and (re)frames the speech activity. For instance, one debater's choice of kinship terms and nicknames, which carries the connotation of informality, to address his opponent(s), on the one hand, reframed the debates away from their tenor of serious exchanges of political views to informal banter. On the other hand, this use of familiar forms of address also characterized his more casual and informal communicative style, which stands in contrast with the other two debaters.

Key Words: address forms, political debates, speech activity, communicative style

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1. Introduction

The use of address forms is one of the most obvious linguistic means that marks and establishes the type of relationship between interactants. Brown and Gilman's (1960/1972) analysis of the use of pronouns in European languages is the classic and most influential study of address forms. They have observed that some European languages, such as French, German, Italian, and Spanish, have two forms for 'you'; one is for people who deserve deference either because their social status is above the speaker's, or because the speaker does not have a sufficiently close personal relationship with them. Brown and Gilman propose that the choice of these two forms is basically governed by two semantics, which they call 'power' and 'solidarity'. While 'power' derives from higher or lower social status, 'solidarity' comes from intimacy and 'shared fate'. The less powerful person uses the deferential pronoun *V* to the more powerful one and receives the familiar pronoun *T* in return. On the other hand, in a symmetrical relationship, the two speakers may use *T* or *V* to show solidarity or deference to each other, respectively. Brown and Gilman also indicate that the nonreciprocal pattern is used in only a few social situations and the use of mutual *T*, as opposed to mutual *V*, seems to be increasing. This tendency implies that solidarity has nowadays won out over power as the dominant governing semantic in Western society.

Ever since Brown and Gilman's pioneering research, the address systems in some 20 languages have been extensively studied, among them, Brown and Ford (1961/1964), Slobin et al. (1968), and Ervin-Tripp (1972/1986) in American English; Friedrich (1972/1986) in Russian; Bates and Benigni (1975) in Swedish. In general, the results of these studies verify the main points Brown and Gilman have made and this suggests that the notion of 'power' and 'solidarity' seems to be universal.

My previous study (Kuo 1990) has indicated that the Chinese address system currently practiced in Taiwan has the organization it does because it is embedded in a hierarchical social system which distinguishes individuals most crucially in terms of age, sex, social position, and group membership. The Chinese system, although it confirms the broad outline of Brown and Gilman's two-semantic model and all the address forms can be categorized as either the deferential *V* or the solidarity *T*, is characterized and complicated by its extensive use of kinship terms in extra-familial social relationships. This characteristic, together with the dominant power semantic, marks the Chinese system as being in sharp con-

trast to the simpler Western system in which solidarity has gained supremacy.

Researchers have studied the pragmatic manipulation of address forms in various speech contexts. For instance, Ervin-Tripp (1972/1986) cites a real life example in which a white policeman, after learning a black psychologist's social identity, still insists on addressing him as 'boy' instead of 'Dr.' to insult him. Therefore, speakers, by manipulating the address form system, may position themselves and express their attitudes of respect or contempt, intimacy or distance, toward the addressee as well as position the addressee.

The manipulation of distance through address forms is also explored in political discourse, in which politicians tend to exploit language to gain both political and interactional advantages over their political opponents. Jaworski and Galasinski (2000a, 2000b) examine the role of address forms in shaping the political space, breaking the interactional norms, and gaining ideological legitimacy in political debates. Focusing on the debating style of Lech Walesa, the former Solidarity trade union leader and president of Poland, Jaworski and Galansinski have found that Walesa not only challenges the rule of no direct address to the opposing candidate, but also subverts the debate's institutional nature by using marked, nonreciprocal, and overly familiar address forms. They conclude that Walesa's interactional style, including his deviant form of address, instead of presenting the speaker as a folk hero and lone fighter against Communism, is considered 'rude' and 'colloquial' in formal political debates.

Based on video-taped data from two televised 1998 Taipei mayoral debates, this study aims to examine, both qualitatively and quantitatively, the use of address forms in Chinese political discourse from sociolinguistic and pragmatic perspectives. The focus of the study will be on how a debater chooses a particular address form to locate his opponent(s) in this adversarial political event and to (re)define or construct the political actors' mutual relationship. In the following, Section 2 describes the data for this study, including the political background of the analyzed debates. Section 3 presents an analysis of the use of address forms by the three debaters. Section 4 discusses the implications and significance of the findings.

2. Background and database

The data used in this study come from two televised debates among three candidates in the 1998 Taipei mayoral election. In the following I will first give an overview of the political situation of the mayoral election campaign.

On December 5, 1998, Taiwan held a 'three-in-one' election, in which a total

of 12 parties competed for 225 seats in the Legislative Yuan and the 2 mayorships and 96 city council seats in Taipei and Kaohsiung. The legislative race was the most important in that if the opposition did well, the ruling Kuomintang (KMT, the Nationalist Party) could lose its thin majority, possibly propelling Taiwan into an era of fractious politics and coalition government. However, viewed by many people as a 'dress rehearsal' for the 2000 presidential election, the Taipei mayoral race dominated the media's agenda.

The Taipei race drew island-wide and even international attention not only because of its unprecedented importance to the island's future, but also owing to the fact that this was a neck-and-neck race between the incumbent mayor Chen Shui-bian and Ma Ying-jeou, who was nominated by the KMT. Chen, who is from the opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), has earned a reputation as one of the island's foremost heroes in the struggle for democracy. When serving as Taipei City councilor and legislator, Chen was renowned for his efficiency and eloquence. His political career came to its apogee when, in 1994, he defeated nominees from the KMT and the New Party (NP) and became Taipei's first non-KMT mayor in a generation. Mayor Chen became wildly popular with his crackdowns on traffic, trash, and prostitution. Many believed that if Chen were re-elected, he would emerge as the strongest contender for the presidency when Lee Teng-hui completed his second and final term in 2000. With his pro-independence stance, Chen would evoke strong reaction from the PRC if he were re-elected. Apart from his political position, Chen was also severely criticized for his 'dictatorial and oppressive' leadership style, even though the approval rating of his administration was over 70%.

Chen's major challenger, Ma, is a second-generation mainlander. With a Ph.D from Harvard Law School, Ma was considered one of the most promising young KMT politicians. As Justice Minister in the mid-1990s, Ma fought corruption, winning popular support while making numerous enemies in the KMT establishment. He resigned from his post in 1997, announcing that he no longer knew 'what to fight for or whom to fight for'. Viewed as the only Nationalist with the charisma to challenge and beat Chen, Ma finally accepted the KMT's nomination, although he had repeatedly declared that he would never enter the race. Ma's turnaround decision, however welcomed by his supporters, damaged his credibility, which was repeatedly questioned by both of his rivals during the debates.

Wang Chien-shien, the New Party candidate who was running a distant third in the polls and had a slim chance of victory, has a political record no less impressive than either Chen or Ma. A devout Christian, Wang was considered

one of the most capable government officials when he served as Finance Minister. His honesty and outspokenness won him the nickname *xiaogangpao* 'little steel cannon'. However, like Ma, he was forced to leave his job in the early 1990s, after which he established the New Party with a group of KMT break-aways. In the 1992 election, Wang won the highest number of votes in Taipei City and became a legislator. In this mayoral election, Wang strongly advocated a clean election campaign, which involved not only avoiding verbal abuse but reducing trash from left-over campaign flags and publications. Although Wang was widely praised by voters and observers for his good character and puritan-style campaign, his support rating in opinion polls climbed no higher than 10 percent throughout the campaign, which is low compared with the 30 percent plus garnered by both Ma and Chen. Many even suspected that Wang would give up his mayoral bid since there was an overlapping between his and Ma's votes and his NP supporters might shift to vote for Ma, who was much more likely to win the race.

Five televised public debates were held during the period from October to December 1998, when the campaign was in progress. While each of the two three-way debates, on which my analysis is based, lasted about 160 minutes, each of the three one-on-one debates between individual pairs of the three candidates lasted about 120 minutes. Each debate started with the candidates' statements on policy platform, which were then followed by a question-answer session in which each candidate responded to queries posed by three pre-selected media representatives. The debate ended with candidates' concluding statements. Unlike ordinary conversation, the organization of debate is characterized by pre-allocated turn order and turn length. Moreover, instead of debating each other directly, the candidates had to debate through the panelists' questions. During these debates, Wang's sense of humor and quick wit won him the most applause from the audience and the highest assessments from the commentators (*China Post*, Oct. 25, 1998).

Although the much-watched televised debates were considered one of the positive changes in the campaigning process, the fiery campaign was dominated by exchanges of malicious accusations and verbal abuse between Chen's and Ma's camps. The over 80 percent turnout rate on Dec. 5 also evidenced the strong passion and enthusiasm of the electorate. Garnering more than 51 percent of the total vote, Ma toppled Chen and returned control of the capital city to the KMT after four years of DPP rule. As Wang only received 3 percent of the vote, many attributed Ma's hard-earned victory to the New Party supporters' strategic voting. It was also believed that the endorsement of the conservative

Ma and the rejection of the sometimes provocative Chen reflected the residents of Taipei's preference for maintaining the status quo in cross-strait relations (*Free China Review*, February 1999).¹

3. Analysis

Chao (1956/1976) has divided Chinese terms of address into (1) vocatives, or terms of direct address to call persons by, and (2) designatives, or mentioning terms, which one uses as part of connected discourse in speaking of a person. Constrained by the rigid organization of the debates, the debaters in my data were not supposed to address one another but only to answer questions from the three panelists. As a result, address forms in this study are mainly designatives rather than vocatives, although all three debaters were found to break the rule and address their opponents directly by asking a question or challenging a point.

There are altogether 275 instances of address forms in the two debates. Table (1) below summarizes the results obtained for the three candidates' use of address forms.

Table (1) Address forms in the two debates

Speaker	Debate 1		Debate 2		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Chen	14	15.7	43	23.1	57	38.8
Ma	38	42.7	91	48.9	129	91.6
Wang	37	41.6	52	28	89	69.6
Total	89	100	186	100	275	100

As the table shows, all three debaters use address forms more frequently in the second debate. Further analysis finds significant differences among the three debaters' use of address forms. This will be discussed in the following.

Chen, the incumbent mayor, uses far fewer address forms than either Ma or Wang in both debates (14 vs. 38 vs. 37; 43 vs. 91 vs. 52), and he consistently addresses or refers to his opponents by surname (SN)+general title (e.g. Ma Xiansheng 'Mr. Ma'). However, compared with his two opponents, Chen is more likely to resort to vague references when attacking his rivals. For instance, in his opening statement of the first debate, Chen repeatedly (6 times altogether) uses non-

1. Although Chen was defeated in the mayoral race, he won the 2000 presidential election.

specific expressions such as *youren* ‘someone’ or *mou yiwei houxuanren* ‘a certain candidate’ instead of making any direct reference to Ma, the target of his attack. This use of vague and non-specific address/referring forms is idiosyncratic to Chen in the two debates. Obeng (1997) calls this type of indirect verbal strategy ‘innuendo’, which violates Grice’s (1975) maxim of manner (i.e. avoid obscurity of expression and ambiguity). Innuendo is usually done by not making any direct reference to the target and by inviting inference. Chen’s use of such a sophisticated technique in political debates not only provides him with some degree of communicative immunity but also maintains his positive public face. Although this employment of obliqueness in reference seems to mitigate the face-threatening force of Chen’s attack, both the audience and the target of this innuendo, i.e. Chen’s political opponent Ma, recognize and understand it.

Ma is Chen’s major challenger, and in the two debates, most of his address forms are directed to Chen (113 out of 129, 87.6%). He addresses or refers to Chen either by surname (SN)/full name (FN)+general title (e.g. Chen *Xiansheng* ‘Mr. Chen’/Chen Shui-bian *Xiansheng* ‘Mr. Chen Shui-bian’) or SN+official title (i.e. Chen *Shizhang* ‘Mayor Chen’) in the first debate, and these two address forms have almost the same frequency (16 vs. 15, see Table (2)). In other words, he uses these two forms interchangeably, and no plausible reason can be found to explain why he chooses one form instead of the other.

Table (2) Ma’s address form (to Chen) in the two debates

	Debate 1		Debate 2	
	n	%	n	%
SN/FL+general title (e.g. Chen Xiansheng)	16	51.6	84	98.8
SN+official title (i.e. Chen Shizhang)	15	48.4	1	1.2
Total	31	100	85	100

However, as Table (2) shows, in the second debate, the number of address forms used by Ma to address Chen is over twice as high as that in the first debate (85 vs. 31). Moreover, Ma’s choice of address form to Chen also changes dramatically. Throughout this debate, he almost invariably addresses or refers to Chen by SN/FN+general title. Only 1 out of his 85 (1.2%) addresses to Chen includes the official title, and this instance is found in Example (1), in which Ma is talking about Chen’s communicative style, which has been widely considered as rude and

abrasive.²

(1)

- 1 Ma: 我 不是 說 陳 市長 一定 要 變成
Wo bushi shuo Chen Shizhang yiding yao biancheng
 I not is say mayor definitely must become
 聖人
shengren,
 saint
- 2 但是 最起碼的 不要 作 一些 錯誤的 示範
danshi zuiqimade, buyao zuo yixie cuowude shifan.
 but at least not make some wrong example
- 3 這個 其實 您 離開 台南 家鄉 已經 很 久
zhege qishi. nin likai Tainan jiaxiang yijing hen jiu
 this actually you leave hometown already very long
 了
le.
 PRT
- 4 您 到 台北 來 已經 很 久 了
nin dao Taipei lai yijing hen jiu le.
 you to come already very long PRT
- 5 我 覺得 您 會 了解
wo jue de. nin hui liao jie,
 I feel you will understand
- 6 以 您 現在 在 政壇 的 聲望 地位
yi nin xianzai zai zhengtan de shengwang diwei,
 for you now in political circle NOM reputation position
- 7 您的 一言一行 哪 很多 孩子 都 在
ninde yiyanyixing na, henduo haizi dou zai
 your every word and deed PRT, many children all are
 學的
xuede.
 learn

2. The Pinyin romanization system is used to present my data, which are originally in Mandarin. However, for the three debaters' names, I have adopted the forms which are often referred to by the Mass Media in Taiwan.

Translation

- 1 Ma: I don't mean that *Mayor Chen* has to become a saint.
- 2 but at least (you) shouldn't set bad examples.
- 3 In fact..*you* left your hometown Tainan some years ago,
- 4 and *you*'ve been in Taipei for quite a while.
- 5 I believe..you'll understand that
- 6 with *your* reputation and status in the political circle today,
- 7 many children are following *your* every word and deed.

In this example, instead of attacking Chen directly, Ma takes an indirect approach by using milder language, including the polite and deferential SN+official title (i.e. Mayor Chen), to make it known to Chen that his inappropriate way of talk will have negative influences on young children. It is also plausible that Ma uses this address form to emphasize Chen's official position and therefore the seriousness of his inappropriate speech behavior. Being the mayor of Taipei, Chen has become a role model for many young children. As a result, whatever he said or did would have influence on young children. Note that in this example, when addressing Chen directly, Ma uses *nin*, the honorific form of the second person singular pronoun *ni*. In the two debates, while *nin* is more likely to occur in a context in which Ma expresses deference and sincerity when trying to reason with or even to persuade his addressee, *ni* is often employed to refer to the addressee for negative purposes.

Brown and Ford (1961/1964) present their system for the American English address forms as a dynamic progression of forms from most formal/distant to most informal/intimate. Ma's apparent address shift in such an adversarial speech event as political debate is strategic and significant. Although SN/FL+general title (e.g. Mr. Chen) signals the necessary distance and respect, it is predominantly a reciprocal address term used between two distant but equal adults when no other professional, occupational or social titles are available. In an official context, the relationship between the mayor of a city and a citizen cannot, by definition, be equal or reciprocal. Thus Ma's sharp increase and predominant use of SN/FN+general title in the second debate, when SN+official title (i.e. Mayor Chen) is clearly available, turns the former address form to the marked one, which, according to Scotton and Wanjan (1983), signals the desire to change the status quo, that is, Chen's mayoralty. This use blurs the distance between Ma and the mayor in office and allows Ma to claim symbolically equality of status, which in effect lessens Chen's status.

Like Ma, Wang is also much more likely to use ‘mayor’ to address Chen in the second debate: In the first debate, almost 80% of his address to Chen includes the official title ‘mayor’, whereas the frequency of this address form drops to 7.3% in the second debate (see Table (3)).

Table (3) Wang’s address forms (to Chen) in two debates

	Debate 1		Debate 2	
	n	%	n	%
SN+general title* (e.g. Chen <i>Xiansheng</i>)	2	6.4	5	12.2
SN+official title** (e.g. Chen <i>Shizhang</i>)	22	79	3	7.3
FN+kinship term*** (e.g. Chen Shui-bian <i>Xiong</i>)	3	9.7	16	39
FN (i.e. Chen Shui-bian)	3	9.7	9	22
Nickname (i.e. A-bian)	1	0.3	8	19.5
Total	31	100	41	100

*This category also includes full name+general title (i.e. Chen Shui-bian *Xiansheng* ‘Mr. Chen Shui-bian’).

**This category also includes full name+official title (i.e. Chen Shui-bian *Shizhang* ‘Mayor Chen Shui-bian’) and nickname+official title (i.e. A-bian *Shizhang* ‘Mayor A-bian’).

***This category also includes nickname+kinship term (i.e. A-bian *Xiong* ‘Brother A-bian’), SN+official title+nickname+kinship term (i.e. Chen *Shizhang* A-bian *Xiong* ‘Mayor Chen Brother A-bian’), and FN+official title+nickname+kinship term (i.e. Chen Shui-bian *Shizhang* A-bian *Xiong* ‘Mayor Chen Shui-bian Brother A-bian’).

Compared with both Chen and Ma, Wang also uses address forms in a more diverse way. While Ma and Chen invariably address their rivals by either SN/FN+general title (e.g. Ma *Xiansheng* ‘Mr. Ma’) or SN+official title (i.e. Chen *Shizhang* ‘Mayor Chen’), the repertoire of Wang’s address forms also includes full name (e.g. Chen Shui-bian, Ma Ying-jeou), FN+general title (e.g. Chen Shui-bian *Xiansheng* ‘Mr. Chen Shui-bian’), FN+official title (e.g. Chen Shui-bian *Shizhang* ‘Mayor Chen Shui-bian’), FN+kinship term (e.g. Ma Ying-jeou *Xiong*

‘Brother Ma Ying-jeou’), nickname (e.g. *A-bian* [to Chen], *Xiaomage* ‘Little Brother Ma’ [to Ma]),³ nickname+kinship term (e.g. *A-bian Xiong* ‘Brother A-bian’), nickname+official title (e.g. *A-bian Shizhang* ‘Mayor A-bian’), SN+official title+nickname+kinship term (i.e. *Chen Shizhang A-bian Xiong* ‘Mayor Chen Brother A-bian’) and the longest one is FN+official title+nickname+kinship term (i.e., *Chen Shui-bian Shizhang A-bian Xiong* ‘Mayor Chen Shui-bian Brother A-bian’).

Note that when Wang uses kinship terms to address Ma or Chen, he follows the Chinese custom, calling them *xiong*, which literally means ‘elder brother’, even though he is the oldest among the three candidates. In Chinese, the person who is addressed by surname/given name+*xiong* is not necessarily older than the speaker. This term signals the speaker’s respect or deference for the addressee rather than the age difference between the two parties. In fact, as both parties can call each other *xiong*, it has lost its age implication in such a relationship. The use of *xiong* to address a person who is actually younger than oneself is one of the Chinese verbal formulas of deferential self-deprecation and overestimation of others. Apart from signaling the speaker’s respect or deference for the addressee, the ‘surname/given name+*xiong*’ form can also signal intimacy, for the speaker considers the addressee who has no relations as a family member. Thus Wang’s use of the kinship term *xiong* to address or refer to his political rivals conveys both power and solidarity simultaneously.

Wang also increases his use of both *xiansheng* (from 2 to 5) and the full name *Chen Shui-bian* (from 3 to 9), which is the least respectful among all the address forms, to address or refer to Chen. Despite the significant increase found in Wang’s use of *xiong* ‘brother’ (from 3 to 16) and the nickname *A-bian* (from 1 to 8) in the second debate when addressing Chen, these two address forms tend to convey sarcasm rather than respect or intimacy considering the hostility and aggression expressed in the content of his speech. Examples (2), (3), and (4) are illustrative of this point. In Example (2), Wang points out that although Chen publicly criticized and insulted President Lee when the mayor campaigned for the DPP candidates in a previous election, Chen in this election praised Lee for Lee’s commitment to democratic reforms so as to expand his support base. Wang stresses that Chen’s ‘flexibility’ is ‘worth learning’.

3. *A-bian*, Chen’s nickname, is a diminutive that traces to his childhood in a small village in southern Taiwan. Chen likes to refer to himself as *A-bian* to emphasize his grassroots background and folksy personality so as to establish or reinforce solidarity with the addressee.

(2) 1-20-11

- 1 Wang: 大家 都 曉得 陳 水扁 市長 阿扁
Dajia dou xiaode Chen Shui-bian Shizhang A-bian
 everybody all know mayor
 兄 非常 有 身段 和 彈性
Xiong feichang you shenduan han tanxing.
 brother very have posture and flexibility
 (laughter and applause)
- 2 本人 記得 在 不久 以前
benren jide zai bujiu yiqian
 I remember, in not long ago
- 3 阿扁 兄 曾經 批評 我們 最高的 當局
A-Bian Xiong cengjing piping women zuigaode dangju
 brother ever criticize our highest authority
 李 登輝 先生 是 老 番顛
Lee Teng-hui Xiansheng shi Lao Fandian
 is old fool
 (applause and laughter)
- 4 這個 從 我們 中華 文化 來說
zhege cong women Zhonghua wenhua laishuo,
 this from our Chinese culture say
- 5 這 是 不可思議 的
zhe shi bukesiyi de,
 this is unthinkable NOM
- 6 可是 我們 剛才 看到 他 對於 李 總統 的
keshi women gangcai kandao ta duiyu Lee Zongtong de
 but we just see he to president NOM
 政績 是 多麼的 推崇
zhengji shi duomode tuichonga,
 accomplishment is very much admire
- 7 身段 之 軟 值得 我們 學習
shenduan zhi ruan, zhide women xuexi.
 posture NOM flexible worth our learn

Translation

- 1 Everybody knows that Mayor Chen **Brother A-bian** is very flexible
 (laughter and applause)
- 2 I remember that not long ago,

→3 **Brother A-bian** criticized our highest authority Mr. Lee Teng-hui as an ‘old fool’

(applause and laughter)

4 from the perspective of our Chinese culture,

5 this is unthinkable.

6 But we’ve just seen he was highly praising the President’s accomplishments.

7 His flexibility is really worthy of our learning.

Although attacking Chen fiercely, Wang uses much less acrimonious language to Ma. For instance, while he employs various types of metaphors—most of them are related to animals—to portray Chen as dictatorial, irresponsible, and unfit to lead, Wang seldom puts Ma into an unfavorable light except when questioning Ma’s credibility. In the two debates, Ma is metaphorized by Wang as a saintly angel or an innocent ‘little white rabbit’ manipulated by the corrupt KMT (Kuo 2003). The fact that Wang engages in considerably fewer attacks against Ma is also reflected in his infrequent use of address forms toward Ma: In the first debate, only 16.2% (6 out of 37) of his address forms are directed to Ma, compared to a higher 21.2% (11 out of 52) in the second debate. Among these 17 instances, Ma’s full name is the most frequently used (8 instances, 47.1%), which is followed by FN/SN + general title (5 instances, 29.4%). The other two forms are FN + kinship term (i.e. Ma Ying-jeou xiong ‘Brother Ma Ying-jeou’) and nickname (i.e. *Xiaomage* ‘Little brother Ma’), and both occur twice in Wang’s speech.

It is found that Wang tends to address or refer to Ma by the latter two forms in a playful manner, which often creates a humorous effect on the audience. As illustrated in (3) and (4), his use of *xiong* ‘brother’ and Ma’s nickname *Xiaomage* ‘Little brother Ma’, similar to what has been discussed in (2), conveys sarcasm rather than solidarity considering the adversarial speech context.

Sarcasm, according to Tannen (1984), is a stylized way of talk which frames an utterances or string of utterance as ‘not meant literally’. Unlike irony or jokes, which intends to amuse and build rapport, the main purpose of sarcasm is often hostile. Tannen (1986) further points out that because of its indirect nature, sarcasm has become a common means of criticism. Since sarcasm conveys hostile criticism, it is not surprising that this linguistic device is frequently found in political debates, which are characterized by confrontation and antagonism. In (3), Wang shows ‘sympathy’ toward Ma, who many believed didn’t have the full support of the President. Wang’s positive sentiment (i.e. he feels

sorry for and sympathetic to Ma) shown in lines 5 and 11, both of which include the kinship term *xiong*, should not be taken literally. On the contrary, the covert message is that Ma is too weak and naive to deserve sympathy. Likewise, he seems to admire and praise Ma's charms and good looks in TV campaigning commercials in (4). However, given that Wang is actually assailing both Chen and Ma for spending much money to promote themselves in this example, the familiar *Xiaomago* in line 4 increases rather than mitigate the hostility in his speech.

(3) 1-20-1

- 1 Wang: 現在 大家 都 很 關心 李 登輝 總統
xianzai dajia dou hen guanxin Lee Teng-hui Zongtong
 now everybody all very concern president
 究竟 是 支持 國民黨 的 馬 英九
jiujing shi zhichi Guomindang de Ma Ying-jeou
 actually is support KMT NOM
- 2 還是 民進黨 的 陳 水扁 呢
haishi Minjindang de Chen Shui-bian ne?
 or DPP NOM PRT
 民意調查 的 顯示
minyidiacha de xianshi,
 poll NOM indication
- 4 居然 絕大多數的 選民 認為 李 總統
juran juedaduoshude xuanmin renwei Lee Zongtong
 unexpectedly majority voter think president
 是 比較 喜歡 陳 水扁 的
shi bijiao xihuan Chen Shui-bian de.
 is more like NOM
- 5 我 對於 馬 英九 兄 寄上 無限的 同情
wo duiyu Ma Ying-jeou Xiong jishang wuxiande tongqing,
 I to brother send infinite sympathy
 (laughter)
- 6 你們的 黨主席 居然 不 支持 你
nimende dangzhuxi juran bu zhichi ni,
 your party chair unexpectedly not support you
- 7 我們 還 有 四十多 天
women hai you sishi duo tian,
 we still have forty more day

- ## Translation

1 Wang: Everybody is very concerned about whether President Lee
Teng-hui supports KMT's Ma Ying-jeou,
2 or DPP's Chen Shui-bian?
3 According to the poll,
4 most voters believe President Lee favors Chen Shui-bian.
→5 I give my deepest sympathy to **Brother Ma Ying-jeou**.
(laughter)
6 Your party chair doesn't even support you.
7 We still have about forty days,
8 we'll wait and see.
(lines omitted)
9 So in the upcoming election,
10 frankly speaking, President Lee still plays an very important
role.

- 11 But I feel very sorry for **Brother Ma Ying-jeou**,
 12 the chairperson of a party doesn't even support his own candidate.

(4) 2-2-11

- 1 Wang: 他們 兩位 在 電子媒體上
Tamen lianwei zai dianzimeitishang,
 They two in electronic media
 2 據 專家 估計
ju zhuanjia guji,
 according expert estimate
 3 都 花了 兩億 以上
dou huale liang yi yishang
 all spend two hundred million above
 →4 所以 你們 看 小馬哥 在 電視上 慢跑
Suoyi nimen kan Xiaomage zai dianshishang manpao
 so you see little brother Ma on television jog
 的 姿態
de zitai,
 NOM posture
 5 多麼 英俊瀟灑
duomo yingjunxiaosa.
 how handsome

Translation

- 1 They've spent in electronic media,
 2 according to experts' estimation,
 3 more than 200 million NT dollars.
 →4 So you see **Little Brother Ma** jogging on TV,
 5 how handsome and charming he is!

To sum up, in the above three examples, although Wang's use of familiar and intimate address forms, along with his flattering or sympathetic words, convey ostensibly positive messages, given the 'contextualization cues' (Gumperz 1982), particularly his exaggerated intonation and voice quality, the contempt and criticism are easily detected. The humorous effect of Wang's sarcasm is evidenced by laughter and applause from the audience. Wang's frequent use of kinship terms and nicknames, which invokes the familiarity of relationship, also marks his casual and informal speech style.

4. Discussion and conclusion

Table (1) in the beginning of Section 3 has revealed that the three debaters use address forms much more frequently in the second debate and there are more than twice as many address forms found in the second debate than in the first one (186 vs. 89).

Political debates, as Benoit and Wells (1996) have rightly pointed out, are 'characterized as essentially instances of persuasive attack and defense' (p. 5), and this adversarial speech event necessitates the participants adopting antagonistic stances, thereby enhancing their own image and damaging that of their opponent. In the two mayoral debates I have analyzed, address forms tend to occur in those excerpts when a debater challenges or attacks his rivals. The incumbent mayor Chen, the primary target of the attack, is also the one who is addressed or referred to most frequently. Among the 275 instances of address forms found in the two debates, 185 (i.e. 67.3%) are addressed to Chen, and 60% of them are from his major challenger Ma. In contrast, having the least chance of winning the election, Wang was least frequently addressed or mentioned. As a result, it may be concluded that the increase in the use of address forms in the second debate, which took place only four days before the election day, signals and reflects the increasing hostility and confrontation. Namely, there is a correlation between choices of address forms and overt verbal opposition. This point is further supported by the strategic choice of address forms by both Ma and Wang. Ma shows a significant increase in his address forms to Chen in the second debate, among which the unmarked and more deferential SN/FL+official title only occurs once. Wang also decreases his use of the official title when addressing Chen.

This finding is in line with my previous investigations based on the same data. My (Kuo 2002) study of pronominal choice has found that there are significant differences with regard to the use of the second person singular pronoun *ni* between the two debates. While more than 60% of the occurrence of *ni* are used by the three debaters to establish solidarity with the audience or voters in the first debate, more than 80% of *ni* in the second debate are used when debaters address their opponents directly to challenge or attack them. Similarly, the largest number of animal metaphors which are used to characterize one's opponent in a negative light concentrates on the second debate (Kuo 2003). All these findings evidence the increased antagonism and confrontation with the approach of the election day.

In addition, compared with Chen and Ma, who invariably address their rivals with either SN+general title or SN/FN+official title, Wang uses address forms in a much more diverse way. His choice of kinship terms or nicknames, which carries the connotation of informality, to address his rivals, on the one hand, reframes the debates away from their tenor of serious exchanges of political views to informal banter; on the other hand, this use of familiar forms of address also characterizes his more casual and informal communicative style, which stands in contrast with the styles of the other two candidates.

Finally, it has to be emphasized that the function/meaning of address forms, like all the other linguistic devices, are context-dependent, that is, it should be interpreted and understood in their context. For instance, kinship terms or nicknames may signal intimacy and solidarity in one context but sarcasm or criticism in the other. Therefore, when exploring the interpersonal dimension of a particular linguistic form in discourse, we need to be more careful and we should always take into consideration the context, the speaker's conversational style, and the interactive frame.

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台灣政治言談中稱謂語的使用： 八十七年台北市長電視辯論之分析

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摘 要

本文從社會語言學與語用學的角度分析民國八十七年台北市長選舉兩場電視辯論中稱謂語的使用情況。我們發現不僅三位市長候選人在稱謂語的使用上有明顯的差異，而且兩場辯論之間也不相同。當時的市長陳水扁總是以姓加上一個頭銜（先生）稱呼其對手；兩位挑戰者在第一場辯論中通常使用包括官銜（市長）等較為尊敬的稱謂語，但是在第二場辯論中卻改用較為疏遠而不尊敬的方式稱呼陳水扁，有時甚至直呼其全名。這種語言策略上的轉變顯示，與第一場論相較，距離投票日只有四天的第二場辯論，在性質上顯得充滿敵意與衝突。此外，辯論者對於稱謂語的選擇也反應了個人的語言風格以及語言活動的變化。

關鍵詞：社會語言學，語用學，政治辯論，稱謂語