

Re: addressing someone without –san or similar

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From: Mark Bradford (tla_at_surly.org)

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In article

<42373c2f4aa204ec1bd98d3b0e3eb7d9.124837@mygate.mailgate.org>, "Adam Atkinson" <ghira@mistral.co.uk> wrote:

- > *I've been watching the anime "Hikaru no Go" about a boy, a ghost,*
- > *and the game of Go. I can't help noticing that the boy and the*
- > *ghost address each other using just their names, "Hikaru" and "Sai",*
- > *whereas almost all other conversations in the series have –san, –kun,*
- > *–chan, –sensei or whatever. I think Hikaru addresses a bearded man*
- > *called Tsubaki as just "Tsubaki" exactly once out of surprise,*
- > *and is reprimanded for it.*
- >
- > *Is there any special significance to Hikaru and Sai's addressing each*
- > *other this way? When we hear characters' thoughts, they think*
- > *about people using names with no suffixes. Is this a usual*
- > *convention?*

If you're interested in the observations of someone who doesn't know as much Japanese as the other responders, but who has the advantage of having seen *Hikaru no Go*...

First, a general observation: in the anime I have seen (cue the "anime is not real life" comments — yes, yes, I know, however we're actually talking about anime here, and I'm one of those anime fans able to distinguish between [attempts to portray] fantasy and [attempts to portray] realistic situations), honorifics are omitted in situations of conscious insult, or great personal intimacy; in other words, where normal rules of politeness don't apply. Often (though not always) honorifics are omitted between siblings, or from parent to child.

Second, a specific observation: Hikaru, as you've seen, is a very rude little boy. He uses rough speech (usually "ore" and "omae"), and calls other characters, not just Sai, by their names without honorifics. (And gets called simply 'Shindou' in return, by some of them.)

As for Sai, my guess is that either he sees himself in sort of a parental role to Hikaru, being his Go mentor, or it's because they're essentially thinking to one another. And it's hard to get more intimate

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than being haunter and haunted, I suppose.

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"It is good to have an open mind, but not at both ends."