


称呼

ADDRESSING EACH OTHER

各国、各民族语言不同，风俗习惯各异，称呼上的差别也很大。中国人是如何互相称呼的呢？



Countries and nations with different languages and customs also differ a lot in forms of address. How do Chinese people address each other, then?



“称呼”指的是人们在人际交往中，彼此之间所用的称谓语。中国人的称呼，不仅能反映出被称呼者的身份、地位，更能反映出称呼者和被称呼者之间的关系。

比如有个中年男子叫“李明华”，任经理一职，看看不同的人怎么称呼他：如果彼此关系比较密切，年龄相仿的同事、朋友会称他“老李”或“明华”，长辈会称他“小李”或“明华”，晚辈会称他“老李”或“李哥”；关系一般的客户会称他为“李经理”；陌生人一般会称他为“先生”。

为了表示亲近，中国人喜欢根据被称呼者的年龄，在姓氏前加“老/小”来称呼。但你也许会发现，有的小伙子被称为“老李”，有的中年人却被称为“小李”，甚至上例中的“李明华”同时被人称作“老李”和“小

李”。这是因为“老/小”更多的体现了一种相对的年龄关系。在长辈眼里，不管多大都可以称其“小李”，同辈和晚辈为了表示亲切与尊重，不管是不是年纪很大，都可以称其“老李”。中国人认为，“老”是一种资历，越“老”经验越多，地位越高，越值得尊敬。在称呼德高望重而真正上了年纪的人的时候，会在姓氏后加“老”，如“李老”，表达最崇高的敬意。

为了表示亲近，中国人也喜欢把在家族里、亲戚之间的称呼用在毫无亲缘关系的人身上。比如，只是同事关系，而称呼却可能是“孙哥”、“刘姐”，甚至向陌生人问路时，很多人也以“大哥”、“大爷”相称。中国人认为，家人是最亲近的人，在称呼上与家人享受同等待遇，可以体现对人的亲近之意。

这些被称为“哥”、“姐”的人，年纪未必真的比称呼者大。而像在问路时，甚至不需要知道对方的具体年纪，就可以以“哥”、“姐”相称。因为中国人很重视长幼尊卑的顺序，长者为尊，幼者为卑，将对方称作“兄

“Form of address” refers to the word used by people to call each other in interpersonal communication. Chinese people’s form of address reveals not only the identity and position of the addressee, but also the relationship between the addresser and the addressee.

For instance, let us take a look at how people address a middle-aged man Li Minghua who works as a manager. Colleagues and friends who are of similar age and in close relationship with him call him “Lao Li”(old Li) or “Minghua”. Seniors call him “Xiao Li”(Young Li) or “Minghua” while juniors call him “Lao Li” or “Li Ge”(Brother Li). Clients that are not very close to him call him “Manager Li” and strangers mostly call him “Sir”.

To show intimacy, Chinese people tend to add “Lao”(old) or “Xiao”(young) before the surname according to the age of the addressee. You may find, however, that some young men are called “Lao Li” while some middle-aged men are called “Xiao Li”. In the above-mentioned example,

Li Minghua can be either called “Lao Li” or “Xiao Li”. The reason is that “Lao” and “Xiao” only reflect the relative age. Therefore, no matter how old he is, the older generation will call him “Xiao Li” and people of younger or the same generation will call him “Lao Li” out of their respect for him. In Chinese people’s opinion, “Lao” represents a kind of qualification. An older age means more experience and higher position and deserves more respect. When addressing the elderly of noble character and high prestige, people will add a “lao” after the surname such as “Li Lao” to express the highest respect.

To indicate intimacy, Chinese people also address people who are not their relatives in the same way





姊”，将自己看作“弟妹”，就表示对对方的尊敬。

为了表示亲近，中国人还喜欢在姓氏后加“职务/职位”来称呼。比如“李老师”、“王经理”。值得一提的是，“老师”这个称呼在中国使用得非常普遍，不仅表示被称呼者的职业，更表示对人的尊敬。中国人常说“一日为师，终身为父”，对老师

“传道授业解惑”之恩始终怀有敬意，“老师”也就成为敬称。被称作“老师”的人，不仅有从事教师职业的人，还有可能是从事文化相关工作的人，或是知识渊博者，或是资历深的前辈，或是教导、帮助过称呼者的人……总之，曾经为别人提供指导的、值得尊敬的人，都可以被称作“老师”。因为在称呼别人“老师”时，等于将自己放到“学生”的位置上，表达对对方的尊重。在一些方言区，比如孔子的家乡山东，人们甚至将“老师”当作一种礼貌性的泛称，不问职业，即使是素昧平生，凡是可称人“先生”、“女士”的场合，皆以“老师”相称。

中国人的称呼不仅仅是一个名字、一个符号，更有拉近关系、表达敬意的功能。选择恰当的称呼，是处理好人际关系的第一步。

as they call their family members and other relatives. For example, one may call his or her colleagues "Sun Ge" (Brother Sun) or "Liu Jie" (Sister Liu) and even call strangers "Dage" (Brother) or "Daye" (Uncle) when asking directions. Chinese people believe that one can show the close relationship with others by calling them in the same manner as they call their family members, the most intimate persons amongst them.

Those called "Ge" (elder brother) or "Jie" (elder sister) are not necessarily older than the addresser. When asking for the way, for example, you can call others "ge" or "jie" without knowing their age. Addressing others as "ge" or "jie" and considering oneself as "di" (younger brother) or "mei" (younger sister) demonstrate one's respect towards others for Chinese people emphasize the hierarchy of old and young, regarding the elderly as superior and young people as inferior.

Putting the name of job position after the surname is also a way for Chinese people to show closeness such as "Li Laoshi" (Teacher Li) and "Wang JingLi" (Manager Wang). It is worth mentioning that the address "teacher" is more widely applied in

today's China because it can either show the job or demonstrate the respect towards the addressee. Always saying that "a teacher of one day is a father of a lifetime", Chinese people respect teachers who "transmit wisdom, impart knowledge and resolve doubts" all the time, thus turning "teacher" into an honorific title. All people, including those taking teaching as the job, those doing culture-related jobs, learned people, people of high qualifications and people who have guided and helped the addresser, can be called "teacher" as long as they have guided others and deserve respect. When calling someone else "teacher", one positions himself or herself as a student to express the respect to the other people. In some dialect regions such as Confucius's hometown Shandong, people even use "teacher" as a polite general term. They may call strangers "teacher" regardless of their jobs instead of "sir" or "madam".

For Chinese people, the form of address is not only a name or a sign but also a way to get close to others and show respect. Choosing proper forms of address is the initial step in successfully dealing with interpersonal relations.

案例

Derek Erickson 是一位企业培训师。有一次，他为一家合资企业的员工工作培训。从第一次上课起，他就告诉学员们，可以叫他“Derek”，或者叫他的中文名“艾德仁”。几次课后，风趣幽默的 Derek 已经跟学员们相处得很不错了，但是他始终不明白，为什么中国学员依然坚持叫他“Erickson 老师”、“艾老师”或者“Sir”。


点评 与其说中国学员不愿直呼 Derek 的名字，不如说他们不敢或不习惯。中国人对师长、上级一定要称“老师”或其他头衔，如果直呼其名就意味着目无尊长。

行动指南

- “老李”、“孙哥”、“大姐”等称呼一般用于非正式场合。“先生”、“女士”或头衔等称呼一般用于正式场合。“老师”这个称呼适用于各种场合。
- 称呼同辈或晚辈，可以直呼其名，可称全名（如“李明华”）也可称名字（如“明华”）。但不可直呼长辈或上级的名字，称“李经理”、“老李”、“李哥”等会显得更为尊敬和亲近。

 CASE STUDY

Derek Erickson is an enterprise trainer. Once he trained the employees of a joint venture enterprise. In the first course, he told his students to call him “Derek” or his Chinese name “Aideren”. However, he found it quite confusing that, when he, a person with witty humor, had established good relationships with his Chinese students after several lessons, they still called him “Erickson Laoshi” (Teacher Erickson), “Ai Laoshi” (teacher Ai) or “Sir”.

 **Comments:** In fact, Chinese students are afraid to call him Derek rather than unwilling to. Since addressing elders and superiors by name implies lack of respect for them, Chinese people always call their teachers and superiors “laoshi” or with other honorific titles.

 ADVICE

- “Lao Li”, “Sun Ge” and “Dage” are often used on informal occasions while “xiansheng” (Sir), “nvshi” (Miss) and other titles are mostly used on formal occasions. “Laoshi” (teacher) can be used on various occasions.

- One can address people of younger or the same generation by their full name (such as “Li Minghua”) or by their given name (such as “Minghua”). However, one cannot do so when addressing elders or superiors. Calling them “Manager Li”, “Lao Li”, or “Li Ge” makes it more feasible to show respect and intimacy.