

奕光東方人文學院  
Chinese Learning Corner 妙妙中文教室

Class Seven 第七課      How should I address you?

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Grammar

1 Polite term in Chinese:

◆ QW + verb + noun = noun + QW + verb

怎麼稱呼您? (Zen3 me cheng1 hu1 nin2?) = 您怎麼稱呼? (Nin2 zen3 me cheng1 hu1?)

How should I address you?

Example:

A: 怎麼稱呼您? (Zen3 me cheng1 hu1 nin2?) How should I address you?

B: 我姓文, 您可以叫我小文。(Wo3 xing4 Wen2, nin2 ke3 yi3 jiao4 wo3 xiao3 Wen2) My family name is Wen, you can call me little Wen.

B: 您也可以稱呼我文先生。(Nin2 ye3 ke3 yi3 cheng1 hu1 wo3 Wen2 xian1 sheng1.) You can also call me Mr. Wen.

◆ 貴姓(gui4 xing4), 敝姓(bi4 xing4), 姓 family name.

◆ It is important that you know some polite terms in Chinese because in Chinese culture, modesty and humbleness are considered very important qualities. This especially is true in formal situations and among strangers. We have learned that the word 貴(gui4) “noble, expensive” is used to ask someone’s family name in a polite manner. In your answer, you should not use the word 貴. Otherwise, it not only defeats your effort to be polite, but on the contrary you actually sound extremely arrogant. 貴姓(gui4 xing4) is often heard in initial encounters. 敝姓 is often heard when replying to the question.

Example:

A: 請問貴姓? (Qing3 wen4 gui4 xing4?) May I ask your family name?

B: 敝姓郭。(Bi4 xing4 Guo1) My family name is Guo.

2 Identifying a character using a compound word

The following usage is very useful when you want to identify a specific character from a group homophone, words that have the same pronunciation but different forms. The formula is below:

A 是 AB 的 A

The important thing to remember is that you must use a common compound word that the listener can easily relate to. This is especially useful when you tell someone your name. Look at the following examples:

國是中國的國。(Guo2 shi4 Zhong1 guo2 de guo2) “Guo2” as in “Zhong1 guo2”

生是學生的生。(Sheng1 shi4 xue2 sheng1 de sheng1) “Sheng1” as in “Xue2 sheng1”

美是美國的美。(Mei3 shi4 Mei3 guo2 de mei3) “Mei3” as in “Mei3 guo2”

多是多少的多。(Duo1 shi4 duo1 shao3 de duo1) “Duo1” as in “Duo1 shao3”

對是對不起的對。(Dui4 shi4 dui4 bu4 qi3 de dui4) “Dui4” as in “Dui4 bu4 qi3”