

Interdisciplinary Journal of Linguistics
Volume [9] 2016, Pp.145-149

Modes of Address in Gojri: A Sociolinguistic Study

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Abstract

Address terms are the starting elements of any conversation and can provide very valuable sociolinguistic information about interlocutors, their relationship and their circumstances. For the purpose of acquiring such sociolinguistic information there have been extensive studies of address terms in different languages in the past few decades. In line with those studies this paper focuses on identifying different types of addressing terms that Gojri interlocutors may use in different contexts. The data for the study was collected from native speakers of the Gojri language through a questionnaire and observation. Personal names, general and occupation titles, kinship related terms, , honorifics, personal pronouns, etc were found to be the possible categories for Gojri addressers' choice. The study also reveals that the Gojri speakers need to be sociolinguistically competent enough to use proper address terms in proper contexts keeping in view the various social attributes like the age, social status, etc. of the addressee.

Key Words: Address Terms, Sociolinguistics, Social Status, Hierarchy.

1. Introduction

Address terms constitute an important class of vocabulary items in a language, and their use can provide with valuable information about the interlocutors and their relationship. The use of address terms is not a haphazard activity; it is rather shaped by different social variables like age, gender, and many other didactic relationships. The use of address terms is therefore an important topic in sociolinguistic research. After the classical study of Brown and Gilman (1960) numerous studies have been carried out to find out the sociolinguistic aspects of the address terms. Gojri language has been left out and little work has been done in Gojri sociolinguistics. The present paper is an attempt to fill the gap that has been left by ignoring the study of sociolinguistic aspects of Gojri Language. The paper aims to find out the linguistic resources available to the addressers. In so doing, the study intends to extract and categorize the range of address terms which Gojri-speaking interlocutors use in different circumstances.

Address terms in different speech communities are worth study. They are likely to be different because different languages have different linguistic resources to express what is culturally permissible and meaningful. Moreover, speakers use address terms to negotiate or transform a cultural system (Fitch 1991, Morford 1997) and issues such as sexuality, age, ethnicity and religion can also be inferred and realized from address terms (Afful 2006).

Throughout the past decades, with a considerable depth and varying issues sociolinguists have been deeply concerned with exploring different dimensions in selection of address terms. As a classic study in sociolinguistics, Brown and Gilman (1960) pronominal address system highlighted the semantic power and solidarity in relation to address terms. Since then good numbers of studies, with much broader scope and depth, have emerged. Brown and Ford (1964) focused on intimacy and status, Hymes (1967) studied social distance, Pride (1971) approached formality and informality and Moles (1974) explored confidence and respect. Consequent studies on address terms focused on other languages and support the view that address forms

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identify and construct cultural beliefs (Evans-Pritchard 1964, Manjulakshmi 2004, Koul 1995 among others).

Mehrotar (1981) describes the non-kin forms of address in Hindi in relation to sociocultural setting of dyads using them. He notes that address forms embody a crucial stage in face-to-face interaction and represent a special aspect of relational language. He further asserts that the differential usage of address terms has been institutionalized as a means of defining and affirming both identity and status of the speaker and the addressee.

Similarly, Hudson (1980) points out that an important dimension of variation in address terms has to do with cultural patterns that hold for some particular population in general due to their social values, beliefs and customs.

Exploring Kashmiri language, Koul (1995) points out that a study of terms of address in any language plays a very important role in socio-linguistic research. He further continues that these terms are determined by certain factors as social structure, cultural pattern and geographical setting. He continues that the selection of modes of address is influenced by different historical and social factors as well.

Manjulakshi (2004) also notes that terms and modes of address are important in any society for purposes of identification and expression of ideas. To her, the use of these terms depends upon the social rank, age, and the sex of the persons involved in any communicative situation.

Wardhaugh (2006) also notes that a variety of social factors usually governs our choices of terms. Among these social factors are the particular occasion, the social status or rank of the other, sex, age, family relationships, occupational hierarchy, transactional status, such as a doctor-patient relationship or priest-penitent, race, and the degree of intimacy.

2. Methodology

The data for the present study was collected by observing the Gojri speakers of Pahalgam area in Anantnag district in different social settings. The responses were also elicited from the Gojri speakers through a questionnaire so as to collect as much of address terms as possible. The observations thus made were recorded and transcribed. The paper attempts to present the linguistic resources available to the Gojri speakers. The attempt is also made to find out the sociolinguistic relevance of these address terms by analyzing the use of address terms in different social settings.

3. The Study

In line with the above studies, the researcher made observations of the usage of address terms by the Gojri speakers in different social settings. The social variables like age, gender, occupation and education were considered for making the observations. On the basis of these social variables the address terms were classified into different categories which are given in the following sections.

3.1. Kinship terms

Gojri language is very rich in address terms related to kinship. There is almost a separate basic address term for every kin in Gojri language. The main kinship terms of address are given in the following table which identifies the basic address terms related to kinship in Gojri language.

English	Gojri	English	Gojri
Father	/ba:p/	Sister's daughter	/pa:ndʒi:/
Mother	/ma:/	Father's elder brother	/ta:yo:/
Father's father	/da:do/	Father's younger brother	/Ka:ko:/
Father's mother	/da:di:/	Father's sister	/puphi:/
English	Gojri	English	Gojri
Mother's father	/na:no/	Mother's brother	/ma:mo/

Mother's mother	/na:ni:/	Mother's sister	/ma:si:/
Son	/gədro/	Father's brother's son	/pite:r pa:ji:/
Daughter	/gədiri:/	Father's brother's daughter	/pite:r be:n/
Son's son	/poto/	Father's sister's son	/puphe:r pa:ji:/
Son's daughter	/poti:/	Father's sister's daughter	/puphe:r be:n/
Daughter's son	/nava:so/	Mother's brother's son	/mame:r pa:ji:/
Daughter's daughter	/nava:si:/	Mother's brother's daughter	/mame:r be:n/
Elder brother	/baɖa: pa:ji:/	Mother's sister's son	/mose:r pa:yi:/
Younger brother	/niko: pa:ji:/	Mother's sister's daughter	/mose:r be:n/
Elder sister	/baɖi: be:n/	Son's wife	/bəhu:/
Younger sister	/niki: be:n/	Daughter's husband	/ɖzama:tro:/
Brother's son	/pəti:ɖʒo/	Father in law	/so:ro:/
Brother's daughter	/pəti:ɖʒi:/	Mother in law	/səsu:/
Sister's son	/pa:ndʒo/	Brother's wife	/pa:bi:/

The usage of basic address terms given in the table usually shows the relationship between the interlocutors. The kinship terms are however not always used in their basic form. The different ways of addressing the kins in addition to the basic address terms are as follows.

The basic address term for father is /ba:p/ in Gojri Language. In addition to this basic address term there are many other ways of addressing the father. For example, /addo:/, /abba:/ and the younger generations prefer to use 'dady' and 'papa' as well. Similarly in addition to the basic address term /ma:/, other forms like /amma:/, /ammi:/, / mami:/are used to address the mother. For uncle, aunt, grandfather, grandmother, the Gojri speakers usually use the basic address terms to address them. For example the address terms like /ta:yo:/, /ka:ko:/, /ma:mo/ are used. The other ways of addressing uncles and aunts, elder brothers, etc include addressing them by the combination of their first name and the basic address term, e.g, /nəzi:r ma:mo:/, /rəhi:m ka:ko:/ etc.

Elders usually address the younger family members by their first names. However showing affection to their children the elders also address them by the basic address terms like: /niko:/, /gədro:/ etc. The other combination used to address the kins is that of the basic kinship term combined with the honorific suffix 'ji', for example 'abba ji', 'tayo ji' etc. However this honorific suffix is not used for addressing the young members by the elders except when intending sarcasm.

3.1.1 Kinship Terms with Non-Kins

The kinship terms are not only meant to be used to address the kins but they are also used with the non-kins as well. The kinship term to be used for a non-kin depends upon the age of the addresser and the addressee. Thus a person of one's father's age can be addressed by the combination of the first name and the basic term of address related to uncle. Examples include /rəhi:m chacho:/, /nəzi:r ma:mo:/ etc. Similarly a person of one's elder brother's/sister's age can be addressed accordingly as /nəzir pa:yi/, Roshni be:n etc.

3. 2. Occupation Related Terms

The number of terms related to occupation is probably as many as the occupations themselves. The table below lists some of the main terms of address related to occupation/profession.

English	Gojri	English	Gojri
Doctor	/da:ktar/	Cobbler	/mo:ʃi:/
Engineer	/indʒi:nar/	Potter	/kuma:r /
Lawyer	/vəki:l/	Blacksmith	/loha:r/

Teacher	/ma:star/	Saw	/a:ri:ka/
Carpenter	/tarkha:n/	Driver	/dre:var /

The usage of the occupation related terms can be found with the following combinations.

3.2.1. Job Title and Honorific suffix:

Professionals are usually addressed by the combination of their job title and honorific suffix like ‘ji’ and ‘sahab’. For example a doctor is addressed as /da:ktar sa:b/, engineer as /indzi:nar sa:b/, lawyer as /vaki:l sa:b/ etc.

3. 2. 2. General Address Term ‘Usta:d’

In addition to the above job titles the general term used for addressing people with particular skill is ‘usta:d’ and this is a polite way of addressing a skillful artist. For example, a carpenter, a cobbler, blacksmith, potter etc are addressed with a general term ‘usta:d’.

3. 2.3. General Address Term ‘Usta:d’ and Honorific suffix

This general term is also combined with the honorific suffix ‘ji’ to address the skilful artists which is the most polite way of addressing the skilful artists. Examples include, /tarkha:n ji/, /mo:chi: ji/ etc. The honorific suffix ‘sa:b’ is however rarely used with people belonging to skill based occupations.

4. Personal Names

The names of Gujjars consist of three parts, i.e, first name, middle name and the last name. The personal names can be used with different combinations to address each other.

4.1. First Name

It is considered disrespectful and impolite to address a person with his first name. However the use of first name for addressing may be found where there is a status difference. Thus it is common to see elders addressing the young by their first names. Similarly intimate people also use first name mutually to address each other and teenagers also address each other by the first name. Thus interlocutors in solidarity use first name mutually where as in power relations the mutual use of first name is not found. It may be noted the first names like Gulam, Abdul and Mohammad, are not used alone and can only be used by combining them with second names.

4.2. Middle Name

Middle name is sometimes used separately and sometimes it is combined with the First name. For example, Abdul Majid Khatana is sometimes addressed as Majid and sometimes as Abdul Majid. The combination of First and second name is considered as polite.

Most of the names contain ‘Ahmad’ as the middle name. Such a middle name is not used alone to address any person. However the other second names like Akram, Hussain etc can be used separately to address a person.

4.3. Last Name

Gujjars having the same Last name do not address each other by the last name. However in many cases when the Last names of the interlocutors are different, they may address each other by the last name as well but this last name is then suffixed by an honorific like ‘sahab’ to make it polite. For example Khatana sahab, kasana sahab, khan sahab etc.

The different combinations of the personal names used by Gujjars to address each other are given in the following table.

Address form I Related to first name	Address form II Possible combinations with middle name	Address form III Possible combinations with last name
FN, FN + Honorific, FN + MN	MN, MN + Honorific, FN + MN	LN + Honorific

5. Religion related terms

There are mainly two ways of using the religion related terms for addressing people. The first way of using address terms related to religion depend upon the addressee’s having visited holy places of Mecca and Medina for Hajj. Thus a person having performed Hajj is addressed as ‘Haji sahab’. The term ‘Haji’ in itself is considered as honorific and is also added to the First name of the person having performed Hajj. For example, Saani Haji etc.

The second way depends upon the religious knowledge of the addressee. Therefore a person having a good religious knowledge is addressed as ‘Molvi sahab’, ‘Mufti sahab’ etc.

The combinations of using address terms related to religion are given in the following table.

Combination I	Combination II
FN + Religious Term	Religious Term + Honorific Suffix

6. Conclusion

The abundance of usage of honorifics shows the courteousness of the Gojri speakers. Another distinctive feature of Gojri is revealed in the use of kinship address terms. Gojri is found to be very dependent on the family relations and this is especially notable in reverse addressing or using kinships for non-relatives. Restrictions in the use of personal names on the one hand and the tendency to use general and occupational titles, honorifics and terms of formality make it certain that the sense of formality is also another striking feature of Gojri culture and language in general and address terms in particular. Gojri language has a very rich vocabulary related to address terms having separate address terms for the elder brother and younger brother, similarly for elder uncle and younger uncle. The Gojri speakers mostly use the address-terms of their own language and the usage of the address-terms of other dominant languages is hardly seen. This indicates that the Gojri language is not dynamic enough to accommodate elements from other languages. The same can be viewed as a positive attitude of the Gojri speakers towards their language.

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