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The Realization of Address Terms in Kashmiri

Saima Jan *

Abstract

As an important interface between language and society, modes of address can provide valuable sociolinguistic information about the interlocutors and their relationship. As a result, in the past few decades address terms in different languages have been studied from different angles and with varying focus. In line with those studies, the present research paper focuses on identifying different types of addressing expressions that Kashmiri interlocutors use in diverse contexts. Personal names, surnames, general and occupational titles, kinship terms, non-kinship terms, religious oriented expressions, honorifics, terms of intimacy, personal pronouns, descriptive phrases and employing greetings or attention getters to avoid address terms, interjections, residential terms and indirect terms for addressing each other were found to be the possible categories for Kashmiri addressers' choice. The study also reveals that Kashmiri language is rich enough in this respect and that an artful skill is required for Kashmiri speakers to make an accurate and proper use of the vast range of choices for addressing individuals in various contexts.

Key Words: Address Term, Kashmiri, Speaker, Recipient, Communication, Society, Interlocutors.

Introduction

Establishing social relationship between individuals is perhaps the first step to every communicative event. To do so, people may choose different techniques to open, further maintain, or close conversations. One important issue in studying communication is to learn how individuals manage to open conversations or how people may address one another in a given language. As an important interface between language and society, modes of address can provide valuable sociolinguistic information about the interlocutors and their relationship. As a result, in the past few decades address terms in different languages have been studied from different angles and with varying focus.

Forms of address have their roots in socio-cultural context of a society. As 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. Oyetade (1995) defines address terms as words or expressions used in interactive, dyadic and face-to-face situations to designate the person being talked to. To Afful (2006) "terms of address constitute an important part of verbal behavior through which the behavior, norms and practices of a society can be identified". Exploring Kashmiri language, Aejaz M. Sheikh & J. Saima (2016) points out that mode of address in any language plays an important role in socio-linguistic research.

The Study

In line with the above mentioned theoretical and research based views, this paper attempts to present and to some extent, explain the linguistic recourses available to Kashmiri addressers. In doing so, the study intended to extract and categorize the range of address terms which Kashmiri speaking interlocutors use in different circumstances. To capture the corpus of address terms,

* Department of Linguistics , University of Kashmir

the researcher made observations of the terms which Kashmiri speaking male and female interlocutors use to call their recipients in different contexts.

1.Personal Names

In Kashmiri, addressing a person by personal name may happen with the following possibilities:

a) By first name (FN)
b) By middle name (MN)
c) By last name (LN)
d) By full formal name (FFN)

Kashmiris have first, middle and last name included in the full formal name. The usage of middle name is very less as compared to the usage of first and last name. However, the usage of full formal name is mostly seen in formal situations. In Kashmiri, it is not considered respectful to call people by FN. Acceptable cases of FN calling may only be limited to elders addressing young people, or same age group interlocutors addressing each other or teenagers calling each other. Or in very formal settings with observable status differences, superior sect usually call their subordinates mostly by their FN or at times by their FFN, while as in return subordinates address superiors by the honorific title associated with them. Moreover, adding honorific expressions along with the personal names often result in more courtesy and formality in interlocutors' speech.

2. Surnames

A surname or family name or last name is the portion of a personal name that indicates a person's family. Usage of surname as a mode of address is one of the most prevalent features of Kashmiri society. It is the surname of a Kashmiri that marks his identity. Surname reminds him of his history, origin, and the profession of his forefathers. It has much more relevance than any other part of the name.

3. Kinship Terms

Kinship terminologies include the terms of address used in different languages or communities for different relatives, or simply, kinship terms are the terms of reference used to identify the relationship of these relatives to each other. For example, /bo:baj/, /mo:ʤi:/, /mamma:/, etc for addressing mother. In the same way, many addressing terms will be employed to address a single person. Moreover, a single person will be addressed by different persons differently depending upon the type of relationship s/he holds with the addressor.

4.Title Terms

Title here refers to the given initials of individuals in order to show their social ranks, or gender. Below are the gender-specific titles which Kashmiri male and female speakers make use of in their conversation.

One may call his male addressee by:

a) General Title (GT), such as /ʤina:b/
b) GT plus FN, such as /ʤina:b e:ʤa:z/

Kashmiri females are addressed in the same way but by different title terms. Among GTs there are: /musma:ti/, /be:gam/. The example of GT and FN can be / musma:ti ha:ʤira:/, /ha:ʤira: begam/. Among Kashmiri speakers, the frequency of addressing males with general title terms is more as compared to GT plus FN. While as, addressing females with GT plus FN is the only possibility under this head.

5. Religious Address Terms

Religious orientation has left a special impact on address terms in Kashmiri language. One particular way of addressing refers to pilgrim of holy shrines. Accordingly, as a sign of respect in religious situations, or to convey such tendency, it is common to call somebody you guess has been to the city of Mecca and has done the special religious ceremony of /hadʒ/ may be addressed by the term /hə:dʒ sə:b/ for men and /hə:dʒ bə:j/ for women.

One more case of religious oriented address terms is the use of the titles /magdu:mi:/ and /səjid/ for certain males (particularly males) whose pedigree goes back to Holy Imams. These religious titles can be used with the honorific /sə:b/ such as /magdu:mi: sə:b/, /səjid sə:b/. The overall frequency of addressing females by religious address terms is very less.

6. Occupation-Bound Term

Occupation-bound terms are very common in Kashmiri address system. The number of address terms which refer to particular careers or occupational status is probably as many as the occupations themselves. One could address his or her recipient by the following possibilities:

a) Only Job Title (JT): /ɖɔkʈar/, /ma:ʃʈar/, /sar/, /prop^{h}esar/, etc.
b) A combination of JT and FN: /ɖɔkʈar bilkis/, /prop^{h}esar e:dʒa:z/, etc
c) A combination of JT, FN and MN: /prop^{h}esar e:dʒa:z mohmad /,etc.
d) A combination of JT and FFN: /prop^{h}esar e:dʒa:z mohmad ʃe:k^{h}/,etc.
e) A combination of JT and Honorific: /ɖɔkʈar sə:b/, /me:ɖam dʒi:/

In Kashmiri society, most of the professionals particularly males are addressed by the common term /vosta:/, which means someone who is much proficient in his work and thus referred by the term. The address term /vosta:/ is gender bound. Moreover, the honorific term /sə:b/ is added to male job title and /dʒi:/ is added to the female job title.

7. Honorifics or Terms of Formality

Mehrotar (1981) is right in pointing out that the use of honorifics is a common trait of most oriental languages. They are used when a speaker wishes to show respect to the addressees. In Kashmiri, as in other oriental languages like Arabic, Urdu, Hindi, etc, there are appositional expressions, which could be used in order to honor or dignify the addressed person. The honorifics, also referred as the terms of formality may be used in the several forms; before, after, with or without the name of the addressee. The examples of honorific terms are as: /dʒina:b/, /sə:b/, /dʒi:/. The honorific terms /dʒina:b/ and /sə:b/ are not used with female interlocutors. The term /dʒina:b/ is mostly found in isolation as an addressing term. However, these honorific terms are used in combination with almost all other classification types of addressing modes. For example:

Professional title + Honorific term: /ɖɔkʈar sə:b/, /ma:ʃʈar dʒi:/, etc.
Kinship term + Honorific term: /ɖe:ɖ sə:b/, /mamma dʒi:/, etc.
Personal name + Honorific term: /makbu:l sə:b/, /dʒina:b e:dʒaz/, /parvi:na: dʒi:/, etc.
Religious oriented term + Honorific term: /hə:dʒ sə:b/, etc.
Surnames + Honorific terms: /b^{h}aʈ^{h} sə:b/, /ʃe:k^{h} sə:b/, etc.

8.Terms of Intimacy

Given that Kashmiri speakers bear considerable attention to the formality of addressing in speech, there are still situations where intimate partners address each other with more friendly and more amiable tone. By intimacy, I refer to the situations where speaker treats the listener as a member of an in-group, a friend or a person whose wants and personality traits are known and linked. The options through which Kashmiri speakers address their intimate partners are as:

a) Nicknames

b) Abbreviated First name or Diminutive First Name
c) Pet Names or Affectionate terms

In using nicknames in Kashmiri, age, status and degree of intimacy are highly observed. Young children are addressed by nicknames by parents, relatives and close friends. Grandparents also call their grandchildren by nickname to express their affection. For example: /moʈʈa/, /ka:ʧri:/, /go:ʈa:/, /ʈunɖa:/, /zu:ni:/ etc. Nicknames are usually assigned based on some physical feature or habit. Abbreviating or causing diminution of the first name is also prevalent addressing mode found among Kashmiri speakers. For example: /ni:lu/ for neelofar, /paraj/ for parveena, /ʃazu:/ for shazia, /mahi:/ for mahendar, etc. Addressing young age group interlocutors with pet names is also found in the speech of Kashmiri speaking males and females. For example: /ga:ʃa:/, /potra:/, /potri:/, /zuwa:/, /ʤigra:/, etc.

9. Personal Pronouns

Kashmiri language provides the speakers with the possibility to consider solidarity or power in addressing the other side with pronouns. They can call the addressee by /tsɨ/ (second person singular) or /tuhʲ/ (second person plural). Often the second person plural is used for a second person singular to express much respect.

10. Descriptive Phrases

In addition to the categories used so far, Kashmiri interlocutors may use descriptive phrases as courtesy expressions to address others. Terms like /zuw mʲon:/, /ga:ʃ mʲo:n/, /mʲo:n ʃu:ʃ/, etc are usually used to address the recipient.

11. Zero Address Terms

When a Kashmiri addresser is in doubt as to how address people, s/he can actually avoid the difficulty by not using any term. Instead s/he may use attention getters or greetings.

As a common strategy to start a polite conversation, addressers may use attention getters to capture the attention of the recipient by saying /japə:r həz/, /be: adbi: ma:pʰ/, etc. Alternatively, addressors may use greetings like /sala:m/, /namaste:/ or /a:da:b arɨz/.

Conclusion

Address terms can provide valuable sociolinguistic information about the interlocutors and their relationship. In the present research paper, the author has identified fourteen categories of addressing terms used in diverse contexts by interlocutors in different situations to address each other. Personal names, surnames, general and occupational titles, kinship terms, non-kinship terms, religious oriented expressions, honorifics, terms of intimacy, personal pronouns, descriptive phrases and employing greetings or attention getters to avoid address terms, interjections, residential terms and indirect terms for addressing each other were found to be the possible categories for Kashmiri addressers' choice. The study also reveals that Kashmiri language is rich enough in this respect and that an artful skill is required for Kashmiri speakers to make an accurate and proper use of the vast range of choices for addressing individuals in various contexts.

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