

**In the Name of God**



Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman  
Faculty of Literature and Humanities  
Department of foreign languages

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**A Synchronic and Diachronic Approach to the Change  
Route of Address Terms in the Two Recent Centuries of  
Persian Language**

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**Supervisor:**

**Dr. Azadeh Sharifi Moghaddam**

**Advisor:**

**Dr. Vahideh Abolhasani Zadeh**

**Prepared by:**

**Leyla Yazdznpanah**

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**Dedicated to:**

My parents,

My husband

Without them none of these would have been possible.

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**Abstract:**

Terms of address as an important linguistics items provide valuable information about the interlocutors, their relationship and their circumstances. This study was done to investigate the change route of Persian address terms in the two recent centuries including three historical periods of Qajar, Pahlavi and after the Islamic Revolution. Data were extracted from a corpus consisting 24 novels which are considered to better reflect social realities and various interpersonal relationships in different situations. The results indicated that Persian address terms and types change through time in line with changes in society. Developing new address terms over time which is the characteristic of dynamic languages show that Persian language is dynamic enough to comply with the sociocultural changes in its speech communities. Also, address terms can be clearly divided into positive and negative politeness. During the time, all positive address terms have increased in frequency while negative address terms have decreased indicating Persian language is moving from formality to intimacy in relationship.

Furthermore, the results showed that change in address terms and types to a large extent is affected by different social factors, from among the most influencing are; religion, politics, education, gender-equity, social situations and interpersonal relations.

**Key words:** address terms, change, positive politeness, negative politeness

## Table of Contents

<b>Acknowledgement</b> .....	ii
Abstract .....	iii
list of tables .....	viii
list of Graphs .....	ix
list of abbreviations .....	x
Key to phonemic transcriptions .....	xi
<b>Chapter One: Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1. Introduction .....	2
1.1.1. Linguistic definition of “address terms” .....	4
1.1.2. Social meanings and function of address terms .....	6
1.1.3. Types of address terms in Persian .....	9
1.1.4. Address terms and politeness .....	11
1.2. Statement of the problem .....	13
1.3. Significance of the study .....	13
1.4. Objectives of the study .....	15
1.5. Research questions .....	16

1.6. Definition of key terms .....	17
<b>Chapter Two: Review of the related literature .....</b>	<b>20</b>
2.1. Introduction .....	21
2.2. The history of studies on address terms .....	21
2.3. Studies on address terms .....	25
2.3.1. Studies done in the West .....	25
2.3.2. Studies done in the East.....	29
2.3.3. Studies done in Iran .....	36
2.4. Studies on classification of address terms .....	41
2.5. Studies on politeness in address terms.....	43
<b>Chapter Three: Methodology .....</b>	<b>21</b>
3.1. Introduction .....	48
3.2. Theoretical Framework .....	48
3.2.1. Theory of politeness.....	48
3.2.2. Classification of address terms.....	49
3.3. Corpus of the study .....	50
3.4. Data collection procedure .....	51

3.5. Data analysis procedure .....	52
<b>Chapter Four: Results and Discussion.....</b>	<b>53</b>
4.1. Introduction .....	54
4.2. Research Findings And disscussion.....	54
4.2.1. Common address terms and types in the history of Persian language, divided into three historical periods of Qajar, Pahlavi and after the Islamic Revolution .....	54
4.2.2. Frequency of address terms & types in the three historical periods of Qajar, Pahlavi and after the Islamic Revolution .....	92
4.2.3. Analysis of address terms based on the theory of politeness ...	100
4.2.3.1. Positive and negative politeness address terms.....	100
4.2.3.1.1. Positive politeness address terms.....	101
4.2.3.1.2. Negative politeness address terms.....	101
4.2.3.2. Change route of address terms regarding politeness.....	103
4.2.3.2.1. Deletion of address terms.....	103
4.2.3.2.2. Addition of address terms.....	104
4.2.3.2.3. Change in frequency.....	105
4.2.4. Factors affecting changes in address terms.....	109



<b>Chapter Five: Conclusion</b> .....	114
5.1. Introduction.....	115
5.2. Review of the study.....	115
5.3. Conclusion .....	116
5.4. Implications.....	119
5.5. Limitations of the study .....	120
5.6. Suggestions for further research .....	120
<b>References</b> .....	<b>122</b>
<b>Persian References</b> .....	<b>133</b>

## List of Tables

<b>Table</b> .....	<b>page</b>
Table 1 .....	92
Table 2 .....	93
Table 3.....	95
Table 4 .....	95
Table 5 .....	97
Table 6 .....	98
Table 7 .....	106
Table 8.....	106
Table 9 .....	107

## List of Graphs

<b>Graph .....</b>	<b>page</b>
Graph 1 .....	69
Graph 2 .....	80
Graph 3 .....	91
Graph 4 .....	108
Graph 5 .....	109

## List of Abbreviations

FN.....	First Name
LN .....	Last Name
KT .....	Kinship Terms
Q.....	Qajar
P.....	Pahlavi
p.....	percentage
IR.....	Islamic Revolution
ST .....	Skill-related terms
ET.....	Educational terms
MT.....	Military terms

## Key to Phonemic Transcription

### IPA: Doulos Font

#### Symbol

/ʔ/

/a/

/æ/

/b/

/d/

/e/

/f/

/g/

/h/

/i/

/k/

/l/

/m/

/n/

/o/

/p/

/q/

/r/

/s/

/ʃ/

/u/

/v/

/j/

/z/

/ʒ/

/dʒ/

/x/

/ŋ/

#### Example

/ʔærbab/

/mirz**a**/

/kærim/

/b**e**jk/

/bænd**e**/

/reza/

/fazel/

/g**o**lnar/

/h**æ**kim/

/mam**a**ni/

/k**a**mran/

/ʔ**æ**li/

/m**o**lk/

/qorb**a**n/

/ʔ**o**stad/

/p**e**særæm/

/ræf**i**q/

/d**o**ktor/

/s**æ**bije/

/b**a**ʃi/

/d**a**vud/

/v**a**lede/

/m**o**s**j**o/

/p**a**kz**a**d/

/m**æ**ni**ʒ**e/

/h**a**d**ʒ**i/

/x**a**n/

/s**æ**r**h**æ**ŋ**/



# **Chapter one:**

# **Introduction**

## **1.1. Introduction**

Language is a social phenomenon. Gee (1999: 13) defined the social language as “different styles that we use to enact and recognize different identities in different settings”. Studying the language of people is a significant way to understand their culture and norms. Language reveals the people’s values and worldview. It is tied to their culture. According to Hudson (2001: 91), ‘the semantic system of a language is linked to the culture of its speakers’. Thus the meaning that a language can express is tied to the culture of its speakers. Language is essentially a means of communication. Parkinson (1985) stated that learning how individuals open conversations or how people address one another in a certain language is an important issue in studying communication and hence establishing social relationships between individuals. In the words of Aliakbari and Toni (2008: 3), establishing social relationship between individuals is perhaps the first step to every communicative event.

The use of language in communication entails more than just exchanging information about thoughts and factual things from one person to another; it is an important circumstance in which the relationships among people are defined and negotiated. While engaging



in conversations people consciously or unconsciously show their identities, their belonging to a specific culture or social group and their desire to come close or distance themselves from others. Terms of address are the first step to establishing social relationship. These are almost never neutral in the interpersonal meaning they convey, as the choice of a particular form inevitably entails the expression of feelings and attitudes, and it is the result of an evaluation of the interlocutor and of the nature of the relationship holding between the participants.

Terms of address are important linguistic mechanisms by which a speaker's attitude toward, and interpretation of his or her relationship with, a speaker is reflected (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 126). By appropriate use of address terms, people identify themselves as part of a social group while inappropriate choice of the address hinders good communication between the speaker and the hearer (Akindele , 2008). The importance of address forms cannot be overestimated in the use of language in any human society.

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 a ).

### **1.1.1. Linguistic definition of “address terms”**

As a universal concept in all languages of the world, there is little question on the meaning and definition of “address terms”.

Oyetade (1995) referred to address terms as words or expressions used in face-to-face interaction and situations to designate the person being talked to while talk is in progress. Keshavarz (2001) defined this set as “linguistic forms that are used in addressing others to attract their attention or for referring to them in the course of a conversation.”

To Braun (1988) address terms which may serve as a means of initiating contact, refers to linguistic forms which a speaker use to address his/her interlocutors. Braun (ibid) indicated that often address terms designate the interlocutors, but not necessarily so, since their literal lexical meaning can differ from or even contradict the addressee’s characteristics (p.7). For instance, in some Asian countries like Iran a girl

may address her friend's mother as 'aunt' to show respect to her though there is no blood relation between them.

To Afful (2006 b) address terms refer to the linguistic expressions by which a speaker designates an addressee in a face-to-face encounter. Lorente (2002) stated that "terms of address" are distinguished from "reference terms". Although the same linguistic forms may be used for both address terms and reference terms to designate a person in a communicative encounter, there is evidence that this is not always the case. Also Braun (1988, p.11) indicated that rules of address and rules of reference may differ for kinship terms and nominal forms of address. For example, the English 'grandson', 'niece' and 'nephew' and their Arabic counterpart are common forms of reference, but will hardly be used as forms of address. Instead, the usual nominal variant for addressing a grandson, a niece or a nephew would be their first name.

Nevala (2004) stated that the way we address someone directly and the manner in which we refer to that same person are not always the same. The use of direct address formulae is governed by a relationship between two participants: the speaker and the hearer. When choosing a term of reference, however, the speaker not only has to take into account

his/her relationship with the hearer, but also has to decide how to present the referent in a situationally appropriate manner.

To Dickey (1996) ‘address terms’ as a speaker’s linguistic reference to his/her interlocutor(s) is clearly a very broad one and needs further division. He offered an obvious linguistic classification by their parts of speech; into nouns, pronouns, and verbs, and a further syntactic classification of ‘bound’ and ‘free’ forms.

### **1.1.2. Social meanings and function of address terms**

The best place to look for a correspondence between language and society in the grammar of a language is in the pronouns and forms of address. Therefore, “address forms” have been of great interest to sociolinguists, anthropologists, and social psychologists because these forms can conspicuously manifest the relationship between language and society (Keshavarz 2001, p.6).

Braun (1988, p.13) stated that from a sociolinguistic point of view, address behaviors are meaningful whenever speakers have to choose between several variants; all of which are grammatically correct in a given conversational context. Thus, it is assumed that extra-linguistic