Representation of Social Class and Hierarchy in Bangla Address Terms:
A Sociolinguistic Study

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Abstract

Address terms are important language components that represent the existing norms and practices of behaviour, holding specific contextual meanings in society and adding meanings beyond linguistic codes. This paper explores the connection of Bangla address terms with various parameters like age, religious identity, power position, social relationship, ratio of intimacy, and geo-spatial cultural variation through a close analysis of selected discourses. Based on these parameters, it is found that Bangla speakers use a wide range of address terms, which is a special feature of this language, in contrast to English or other languages. In Bangladeshi societies, kinship terms reflect the relationships among the addresser and the addressee, which vary based on paternal and maternal sides, and in different religious and cultural contexts. By employing a qualitative approach to explore the social interaction process, this paper sheds light on the use of Bangla address terms in a culturally diverse context from a sociolinguistic perspective.

Keywords: social interaction, Bangla address terms, kinship terms, power relation, social structure

1. Introduction

1.1 Introductory Understanding of Social Interaction with Address Terms

It is inherent in our human nature that we all have an inclination towards communication. When communicating with others, we use verbal and nonverbal communication methods to express our attitudes, emotions, and intentions. Recognising the importance of verbal communication in

building conversations, our thoughts are aligned with Kurt Lewin (1951) who suggested understanding the underlying social interaction process as a means to address complex social issues. This view emphasises the interconnection between social interaction and verbal communication as integral to the development of conversations, where address terms play a crucial role in shaping the dynamic nature of interaction. In oral conversations, address terms hold an important role as they reflect the relationship between speakers. These terms are used to refer to the addressee(s) (Leech, 1999), functioning not only as a way to initiate, establish and maintain a relationship, but also as the first message conveyed to the addressee(s). (Kang, 2014). In other words, address terms offer sociolinguistic information about the speakers, including their identity, relationship, and the context.

We now live in an age where social interaction has become far more diverse and complex than anticipated, due to rapid transformations in our communication medium and technological development. As a result, a potential field of research in sociolinguistics associated with address terms has developed to explore the dynamic nature of conversation. It is crucial to observe the cross-cultural effects and be aware of the diversity in address terms, taking into account variables such as age, religious identity, power position, social relationship, and level of intimacy. Perhaps the most significant work in this field is that of Brown and Gilman (1960), who explained the use of address pronouns in relation to power relationships and T/V distinctions. The pragmatics of nominal address terms reveal that the social meaning of a word used as an address may not have a close connection to the word's literal meaning (Braun, 1988, as cited in Dickey, 1997). Address terms are culture specific, and learning a language may remain incomplete without the knowledge of address terms because how people address each other is important from the aspects of semantics and pragmatics. With L2 learning and acquisition, the L1 knowledge and practice interfere and the address terms reflect both the linguistic norms and the politeness norms of L1 (Kirkpatrick, 2002). Without the knowledge of pragmatics, it is difficult to build communication or relationship. Address terms reflect the cultural concepts, values and principles of a community, which are helpful for a better understanding of the cultural differences of different language systems.

In bilateral or intercultural communication, knowledge about the variation of address forms may positively work to reduce the risk of growing distance which is termed as 'sociopragmatic failure'. A major reason for sociopragmatic failure may be the incorrect use of address forms that lessen cultural exchanges between the two countries (Barron, 2003; Kasper, 1992; Situmorang,

2018; Thomas, 1983; Zhang, 2011). The social culture of a community and the relationship between its members are engraved and exposed in address forms. Similarly, the formality or informality of the situation, and the politeness or deference the speaker wants to express are reflected in terms of address (Ozcan, 2016).

Address terms are considered linguistic items that reflect the social and cultural identity of a language community (Chen, 2020). To avoid the risk of communication failure, it is essential that speakers not only know about the address terms of a language, but also understand their pragmatics. Bangla is an Indo-Iranian language spoken globally by over 250 million people (Karim, 2013). It possesses a rich array of unique address terms that have a significant socio-cultural impact. Despite the significance of this language, research on the linguistic and cultural aspects of the Bangla language, particularly its address terms, is scarce.

This paper posits that Bangla address terms contain meanings beyond linguistics, reflecting the social, cultural, and historical legacy of its culture, as well as the mindset, practices and beliefs of its speakers. Bangla address terms invoke thoughts regarding the relationship format among the speakers of the Bangla language and culture. Therefore, it is necessary to introduce the nature of Bangla address terms grounded in socio-linguistic discourse to understand its societal structure that has shifted over time. It is also essential to understand the mode of kinship, solidarity and power-distance in the familial and social levels in Bangladesh which are overtly mirrored in the conversation patterns of its people, especially in the use of address terms. Knowledge of the rich diversity and deep-rooted implications of Bangla address terms is a prerequisite for effective intercultural communication. Therefore, this study will significantly contribute to creating an understanding of the social outlook and hierarchy inherent in Bangla address terms.

1.2   Research Questions

Considering the connection between address terms and social interaction as a process of conversation development, this paper aims to explore the defining roles of Bangla address terms in specific socio-cultural contexts of Bangladesh. It further exemplifies the usage of Bangla address terms from a sociolinguistic perspective and develops a comparative-contextual analysis with other languages, especially with English, which is the second most popular medium of communication in Bangladesh.

This study strives to answer the following research questions:

(1) What is the hierarchy of Bangla address terms?

(2)　What anthropological and social framework can be traced from the address terms usedin Bangla?

1.3　Theoretical Framework

This work is based on social identity theory which explores both 'ingroup' and 'outgroup' behaviours that suggest the process of identity formation. This is a "process of difference defined in a relative or flexible way [that] depends on the activities in which one is engaged" (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p.40). The theory establishes that social behaviour demands a change in a person's behaviour when they are in a group compared to when they are not. In other words, this variation is due to a continuum between interpersonal and intergroup behaviour. Social identity theory indicates the social structural factors such as family, religion, law, economy, and class to determine which factors will most influence an individual's behaviour, as well as the forms that behaviour may take. (Turner, 1999; Turner & Reynolds, 2001).

Identity is a "social positioning of self and other" (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p.586) and in any social context, this positioning may emphasize gender, ethnicity, professional status and power since these facets are important to know how individual and collective identities are constructed, negotiated and managed (Mensah, 2021). This approach to identity is dynamic allowing for a constant fluidity and interplay between different aspects of an individual's diverse social and personal identities in response to conceptual differences (Mensah, 2021).

An individual's name, including their first name, last name, nickname, title or surname are all signs that contribute to their personal, social and cultural identity. A social group is a set of individuals who hold a common social identification or view themselves as members of the same social category (Jenkins , 2004; Stets & Burke, 2000). Members of a social group exhibit and share certain behavioural norms, values, attitudes, speech styles and other idiosyncrasies in common. It is this social bond that defines their social identity, and the knowledge that they belong to a social category or group (Hogg & Abrams 1988). For this reason, Leech (1999, p.107) defines address terms as "important formulaic verbal behaviour" involving socially and ideologically situated language use in actual social interactions".

The study attempts to describe various forms of address terms and their sociolinguistic interpretations in Bangla. It intends to revisit how and which address terms are used, to whom, for what purpose and in what sociolinguistic context. The study further demonstrates how address terms in this language can provide information on the power relationship and dominance, and presents the social, cultural and economic setup of the interlocutors within the hierarchical structure of Bangladesh, where not everyone addresses or is addressed in the same way. The study also aims to illustrate how the address terms used in Bangla reflect the norm-referenced mindset of the members of the language community who use these terms.

2.   Literature Review

2.1   Cultural Subjectivity in Choice of Address Terms

Address terms are culturally subjective and play an important role in developing conversations from a social interaction perspective. Brown and Gilman (1960) demonstrated how address terms are connected to social rank social rank, power and solidarity through the T-V distinction in five major and closely related European languages namely Italian, Spanish, French, German, and English. In these languages, two singular pronouns of address terms begin with the Latin *tu* and *vos.* However, over time, the address terms in each language have evolved. For example, in Italian language, the Latin address terms *tu* and *vos* have become *tu* and *voi* (with Lei eventually displacing *voi*). In French language, the Latin *tu* and *vos* have turned into *tu* and *vous* while in Spanish language, the Latin address terms *tu* and *vos* have become *tu* and *vos* (later *usted*). Quite distinctively, in German language, the dissimilarity began with *du* and *Ihr* where *Ihr* was later replaced by *er*, and later *Sie*. Finally, in English language, people initially used 'thou' and 'ye' as address terms, with 'ye' eventually being replaced by 'you'. The ultimate objective of Brown and Gilman (1960, p.255) was to use symbols *T* and *V* (from the Latin *tu* and *vos*) as generic designators for a familiar and polite pronoun in any language. The usage of first and second person pronouns i.e. *I, we* and *you* and the sense of plurality inherent in them are interrelated in many languages and have political implications. Brown and Gilman (1960) noticed the distinct use of plurality in old Latin which is not initiated by the prosaic association of the actual usage of plurality for they found that 'plurality is a very old and ubiquitous metaphor for power'.

Although culture-specific motives are prominent in address terms, other factors such as age, social status, gender, group membership and reciprocity status of the participants can influence the selection of address terms conversations (Gisle & Aijmer, 2011). Macro-sociological variables like age, gender, class and region are responsible for creating variance in choosing address terms both locally and regionally, and sometimes also influenced by the global fashion of addressing others. (Afful, 2006; Aliakbari & Toni, 2008; ; Awoonor-Aziaku, 2021; Braun, 1988; Bruns & Kranich, 2021; Dickey, 1997; Djenar, 2006; Griffin, 2010; Hassall, 2013; Hua, 2010; Wardhaugh, 2006).

Like the address terms of other languages, Bangla address terms focus on socio-cultural and socio-economic structure that can be further connected to geographical area, social stratification, social beliefs, social norms and practices, as well as the mindsets of native people. However, the contextual usage of Bangla address terms in relation to social interactivity is different from other languages. The subjectivity of Bangla address terms can be discussed exploring the similarities and dissimilarities of these terms with other languages, particularly with the English language.

2.2   Power Relationship with Reciprocity in Choice of Address Terms

Power is the relationship between at least two persons that depends on the degree of one's ability to control the behaviour of the other. Power can be based on both tangible variables such as age, sex, physical strength, wealth and monetary remuneration, institutional roles in the workplace or within the family and intangible variables like codified oppression, political patronage etc. (Brown & Gilman, 1960; Damico et al., 2005; Fasold, 1990; Reid & Ng, 2002). Power is identified and studied as a social construct because it is considered a basic organizing principle in society (Foucault, 1972, as cited in Damico et al., 2008). To be specific, address terms act as important indicators in defining and guiding the various roles we assume within society.

In addition to power relationship, address terms show variations across languages, national boundaries, locations, social groups, and individuals including gender aspects (Fasold, 1990, p.4). For example, non-reciprocal patterns are prevalent in rural areas while reciprocal patterns are common in urban settings. In addition, location makes a difference for the address terms used by girls in the younger age group and for boys in the older age group (Lambert & Tucker, 1976, as cited in Ozcan, 2016). Therefore, it can be said that address terms are influenced by a variety of

factors that can be further associated with cultural subjectivity and power dynamics. Address terms reflect power relationships which are essentially culture and language-specific. In relation to political propositions, power and solidarity have a great influence on the choice of address terms (Kim, 2015; Lee & Cho, 2013; Moles, 1978; Salifu, 2010; Sigurd, 1982; Sohn, 1981; Tannen & Kakava, 1992).

However, the issue of power equality also exists. That is, when the speakers are from the same social and power status, a reciprocal address is expected (Ozcan 2016). At the same time, even under similar conditions within the same group, variations may be noticed in the choice of address terms that arise from sources like changing roles, temporary moods and feelings. In some situations, the address terms are expected to be reciprocal, while in other situations, both speakers may want to expose their social relationships through the address terms. Confirming the influence of social and personal relationships on address terms, Ozcan (2016) further explained the connection between address terms and the addresser-addressee relationship:

> *[E]very time a form of address is used, it helps create change or reaffirm a social relationship in addition to indexing a set of conventional expectations and a choice of an address term, whether it is the expected choice or not, is a potential signal of how a person imagines his/her relationship with the addressee.* (p.983)

Typically, an individual with more power chooses to use more intimate forms (e.g., given names) when referring to a subordinate while the latter uses more formal and distant forms such as a family name with a title (Brown & Ford, 1961). Damico et al. (2008) illustrate the power coded in an unequal distribution of address forms in the conversation *"Tommy, how are you doing today?" "I'm feeling great, Dr. Ball."* Considering the perspectives of the addresser and addressee, the change in addressing expressions embodies the change in their feelings and the shift in close or distant relationships, whether they are meeting each other for the first time as well as the mode of communication and types of language they use in social interaction (Zhang, 2011).It is important to note that the use of address terms in Bangla language is somewhat different from many other languages, i.e., from English which is dependent on nominal forms. In the English language, most of its dialects lack a distinction in addressed pronouns (Dickey, 1997), whereas a rich variety of addressed pronouns exist in the Bangla language.

3.   Methodology

This study is based on both primary and secondary data. For primary data, two sources have been used to identify the mode of using address terms in Bangla: literature and realia. The first source consists of excerpts collected from a drama titled *Chaitro Diner Gan* written by Humayun Ahmed, one of the most famous and popular playwrights of Bangladesh. The excerpt from the drama was obtained from an online source (Ahmed, 2017). The second source is comprised of conversations recorded on the same day in different contexts at a university campus and its surroundings. Ethnographic and interactional sociolinguistic methods were used to contextualize the use of address pronouns which are used to construct identities intersubjectively, and to negotiate structures of power and dominance in the society. The justification for using these excerpts is that literature is considered a reliable and authentic source for language learning (Lazar, 2009, p.15), providing learners with linguistic and paralinguistic features of a language.

Additionally, dramas have the potential to represent the real life situations and language use authentically (Davies, 1990). The second source demonstrates how address terms are used in everyday life in Bangla, complying with the norms of the language society. Discourse analysis has been used to examine the socio-cultural and socio-economic contexts reflected in the dialogues of the selected parts of the drama. The secondary data have been collected from related books and articles. The examples of address terms and structures in Bangla used as secondary data in this study are based on the author's lifetime experience and attachment. The author, whose first language is Bangla, is a permanent inhabitant of Bangladesh.

To understand the usage of Bangla address terms and their sociolinguistic implications, a contrastive analysis was conducted. Selected English address terms were juxtaposed to compare and contrast with those in Bangla.

4.   Presentation of Data

4.1   Sample Conversation Chunks from Drama *Chaitro Diner Gan*

The following excerpts consist of selected conversations which represent the use of address terms in Bangla. Excerpt 1 shows a conversation between Majid, the protagonist of the drama and Mr. Chowdhury, a senior of the village who is not Majid's relative.

Excerpt 1:

Majid	: *As salamu alaikum.*
Chowdhury	: *ke, Majid mistri na?*
	[Who is it? *Majid mistri* (Majid, the mason), isn't it?]
Majid	: *Ji, chacha ji.*
	[Yes, *chacha ji* (uncle).]
Chowdhury	: *Chatti shoilyer sathe baindha felcho? Valo , valo , tomar budhdhi ache.*
	(You have attached the umbrella with your body! Very good. You are so smart!)
Majid	: *Gorib mansher budhdhi chacha ji., kame lage na.*
	[We are poor, *chacha ji* (uncle). Our smartness is of no use.]
Chowdhury	: *Ei to kame lagche. Shoilyer sathe chati bandha.. Tumi valo karigor.*
	(No, no, it's working! The umbrella attached with your body! You are an expert.)
Majid	: *Chachaji , asi. Salamalekum.*
	(Chacha ji, I should go now. As salamu alaikum.)
Chowdhury	: *Walekum. Hayre chagol!*
	*(*Walekum. What a fool!)

Excerpt 2:

A conversation between Majid and Sagir, his attendant:

Sagir	: *Ostadji, judhdher khobor ki?*
	[*Ostad ji* (my reverend trainer), what about the war?]
Majid	: *Judhdher khobor shuina lav nai, kam koro.*
	(You have no business with that. Mind your job.)

Excerpt 3:

A conversation between the wife of Mr. Chowdhury and the wife of Majid:

Chowdhury saheber stri	: *Shono Komolar ma, amar barir pichone foler gacher bagan ache.*
	Chowdhury sahib seikhane mela gach lagaiche.
(Mrs. Chowdhury)	[Listen *Komolar ma* (mother of Komola), we have a fruit orchard behind our house. *Chowdhury sahib* (Mr. Chowdhury) has planted many plants there.]

Excerpt 4:

A conversation between Sagir and Majid:

Sagir	: *Iraqer polapan pani khaite parteche na , ei koshte apni pani khaoa bondho korchen. Kintu apni janen na , apnar sathe sathe chachiji o pani khaoa bondho korche.*

[You are not drinking water because children in Iraq are not getting water in the wartime. But you don't know that *chachi ji* (aunty, the wife of Majid) has also stopped drinking water with you.]

4.2 Sample Conversation Chunks from Recorded Conversations

Conversations 1-3 were recorded in an office and its surrounding area at a university on the same day, capturing communication between speakers of various age and positions. This will aid in understanding the use of address pronouns in Bangla. The English translation of the conversations are provided in parentheses. (Note: AP =Address Pronoun, FN = First Name)

1. Professor Khan : *Farhad,* (FN) ***tumi*** (AP) *kothay chile?*
   (Where have you been, Farhad?)

   Farhad : ***Apni*** (AP) *amake khujechilen, sir* (Honorific address term)? *Ami Naim er room e chilam, or songe kaj korchilam.*
   (Were you searching for me, sir? I had been working with Naim in his room.)

   Professor Khan : ***Tumi*** (AP) *ekhon e Azad saheb ke amar room e aste bolo.*
   (Ask Mr. Azad to come to my room just now.)

   Farhad : *Sir,* ***tini*** (pronoun used to mean absent respected person) *ektu age office theke berie gechen. Office time shesh hoye geche, sir.* (He has left, sir, as the office time is over).

2. Farhad : *Naim* (FN)*,* ***tumi*** *(AP) ki chole jachcho?* (Naim, are you leaving?)

   Naim : *Ha, Farhad* (FN)*,* ***Tumi*** *(AP) jabe na?* (Yes, Farhad. Aren't you going?)

   Farhad : *Ami ektu pore jabo. Amar bondhu Shahin asbe. O* (pronoun used to mean an endeared one) *ke nie ber hobo.* (I'll go after a while. My friend Shahin will come. I'll go with him.)

3. Farhad : *Ki khobor Shahin* (FN)*, kemon achis* ***tui*** *(AP)?*
   (What's up, Shahin? How do you do?)

   Shahin: : *Valo achi.* ***Tui*** *(AP) kemon achis, Farhad* (FN)*?*
   (I'm well. How are you, Farhad?)

5. Analysis

5.1 Analysis of the Conversation Excerpts of 4.1

In Excerpt 1, Mr. Chowdhury addresses Majid as *Majid mistri* (Majid, the mason). Mr. Chowdhury is older compared to Majid and has a more superior economic and social status. Calling Majid as *Majid mistri,* Mr. Chowdhury enunciates the power relationship between them or possibly even demeans him. On the other hand, Majid addresses Mr. Chowdhury as *Chacha ji* (uncle) adhering to the norm that seniors, even though not relatives, are addressed with kinship terms.

Next, in Excerpt 2, Sagir, the attendant addresses Majid as *Ostad ji* to show respect to his trainer. Adding *ji* after *Chacha* (uncle) or *Ostad* (the master) is a sign of utmost respect.

In Excerpt 3, Mrs. Chowdhury, the wife of Mr. Chowdhury addresses Majid's wife as *Komolar ma.* Majid's wife is from a social class inferior to that of Mrs. Chowdhury. Moreover, she is seeking help from her and that places her at a lower status. Apart from class identity and relationship, it is a common practice in Bangla to address both relatives and non-relatives, regardless of gender, as someone's mother or father.

Lastly, Excerpt 4 shows a conversation between Sagir and Majid. In this excerpt, Sagir refers to the wife of Majid, his trainer, as *Chachi ji* though he addresses Majid as *Ostad ji.* The practice of addressing a teacher, trainer or master's wife with kinship terms is a popular and typical practice in Bangla.

5.2 Analysis of the Conversation Excerpts of 4.2

In conversations 1–3, Bangla dialogues are indicated with italics and address pronouns are in bold text. The first names and address pronouns are marked as FN and AP respectively in parenthesis in the text. Other pronouns are also mentioned where they occur in the text. In all three instances, a speaker named Farhad is a common person. He is addressed using different pronouns by others, and he himself addresses others, taking into account their age, status, interpersonal relationship with the addressee and the social setting in which the interaction takes place. In example 1, the conversation takes place between a senior Professor Khan and his junior colleague Farhad. The professor uses the address pronoun, *tumi* which is followed by the first name of the addressee

whereas Farhad uses *apni* while responding to the professor and addresses him as *sir*. The use of these address pronouns and honorific gives a clear idea that there is a social distance between them. Professor Khan, being superior and senior, exercises dominance over the addressee (Farhad) and the way the addressee responds uplifts the status of the professor. A kind of power dynamics is active here which is common in the workplace scenario in Bangladesh as well as in some other Asian countries.

In examples 2 and 3, different address pronouns are observed based on the status quotient, interrelationship and intimacy among the interlocutors. The same person interacts with his peer, who is a colleague of the same age in 2, and uses *tumi* to address as they have a minimum social distance. In example 3, the speaker uses *tui* to address his friend which indicates their close relationship without any social distance. The variation is apparent in the address pronouns, *apni*, *tumi* and *tui* though all of them correspond to the same synonym in English, *you*. It is evident, therefore, that the speakers of Bangla maintain the rule of using address pronouns context-wise that vary when they interact within or out of group.

6.   Discussion

6.1 Sociolinguistic Multiplicity of Bangla Address Terms and Kinship Terms

Address terms and kinship terms vary from culture to culture, and even within sub-cultures. The choice of addressing expressions reflects the social relationships of power and equality among the people. For the addresser and addressee, the change of addressing expressions embodies the change of their feelings and the shift in close or distant relationships when they meet each other for the first time (Zhang 2011).

In Bangla, there are multidimensional uses of address terms. Factors such as age difference, social relationship, power position, degree of intimacy, spatial and geographical culture, and religious identity affect the choice of address forms. The use of different kinship terms helps to understand and identify the variance of relationships whereas generalization creates a problem in English and Chinese address terms (Chen 2020).

To contextualise the social interaction discourse in Bangla-English address terms, kinship plays a crucial role in explaining the relationships among the addressers and the addressees. The paternal and maternal sides in different religious and geographical cultures also add variations in

address terms. For example, in Bangla, addressing father and mother manifests a number of variations due to cultural, geo-spatial differences and social positioning. *Abbi* or *Ammi* commemorates the country's former existence with Pakistan, with a distinct alliance of Muslim religious culture. Adding *Thakur* to address paternal relatives and relatives of the husband is a custom in the Hindu community and other religions besides Muslims. This establishes the importance and superiority of the father and his relatives in the patriarchal social system because the term *Thakur* connects to utmost respect and obedience in the culture. In the same way, using *Jan* with kinship terms(e.g. *Abbajan, Ammajan, Dadajan, Nanajan* etc.) was common among the educated and aristocratic Muslims to show more respect or nearness, which is now dated. Rustic and uneducated commoners had less variance then, as well as now, and they simply address parents as *Abba, Bap/ Babu/Bapu/Bapjan (*father*) and Ma (*mother*).*

Table 1: Equivalent Bangla and English relationship terms

No.	Relationship	Muslim kin terms	Kin terms in other religion (especially Hindu)	Equivalent terms in English
1	Father	*baba, abba, abbu, abbajan. abbi*	*baba*	father, daddy, dad, papa, pop
2	Mother	*ma, amma, ammu, mamoni, ammajan, ammi*	*ma, mamoni*	mother, mommy, mom
3	Father's father	*dada, dadajan, dadavai, dadu*	*thakurdada, dadu*	Grandpa
4	Father's mother	*dadi, dadima, dadijan, dadu, dida*	*thakurma, dida, didima*	grandma, granny
5	Mother's father	*nana, nanavai, nanajan. nanu*	*dadu*	Grandpa
6	Mother's mother	*nani,nanijan, nanu*	*didima, dida*	grandma, granny
7	Father's elder brother	*kaka, chacha, chachajan, jyatha, khuro*	*jyatha, khuro*	uncle
8	Wife of father's elder brother	*kaki, kakima, chachi, chachijan, jyathi*	*jathaima, khurima*	Aunt
9	Father's younger brother	*chacha, kaka, kaku*	*kaka, kaku*	uncle
10	Wife of father's younger brother	*chachi, kaki, kakima,*	*kaki, kakima*	Aunt
11	Mother's elder brother	*mama, mamajan*	*mama*	Uncle
12	Wife of mother's elder brother	*mami, mamani, mamijan, mami ma*	*mami, mami ma*	Aunt
13	Mother's younger brother	*mama, mamu*	*mama, mamu*	uncle

14	Wife of mother's younger brother	*mami, mami ma*	*mami, mami ma*	aunt
15	Father's sister	*fupu, fupu amma, fupujan, fupi*	*pishi, pishi ma, pishi moni*	aunt
16	Husband of father's sister	*fupa, fupa abba, fupajan*	*pisha, pishe moshai, pishu*	uncle
17	Mother's sister	*khala, khala amma, khala moni*	*mashi, mashi ma, mashi moni*	aunt
18	Husband of mother's sister	*khalu, khalu abba, khalujan*	*mesho, mesho moshai*	uncle
19	Elder brother	*bhai, bhaia, bhaijan, dada*	*dada, dada bhai*	brother
20	Elder sister	*apa, apu, api, bubu, bu jan, buji, bu*	*didi, didi bhai*	sister
21	Younger sister	Usually addressed by their FN. *Apu* is used for endearment.	Usually addressed by their FN.	Usually addressed by their FN.
22	Brother's son	*bhai po, bhaste*. Usually addressed by their FN	*bhai po, bhaste*. Usually addressed by their FN	nephew. Usually addressed by their FN
23	Sister's son	*bhagne, bon po*. Ususally addressed by their FN.	*bhagne, bon po*. Ususally addressed by their FN.	nephew. Usually addressed by their FN
24	Brother's daughter	*bhai jhi, bhasti*. Usually addressed by their FN.	*bhai jhi, bhasti*. Usually addressed by their FN.	niece. Usually addressed by their FN
25	Sister's daughter	*bhagni, bon jhi*. Usually addressed by their FN.	*bhagni, bon jhi*. Usually addressed by their FN.	niece. Usually addressed by their FN

Note: FN- First Name

6.2   Use of Honorifics in Address Forms

Honorifics are used to convey respect or politeness. They are usually added as prefixes to the first or last name of the person being addressed. Based on the data collected from Al-Rawi and Al-Assam (2018, pp.1-28) and Hawkins (n.d.), common English honorifics include *Mr. Ms, Miss, Mrs. Sir, Lady* etc. Ranks, occupations and positions are also marked by some honorifics like *Earl, Duke, Prince, Doctor, Professor, Father, General, Major* etc. They are used with or without the person's name. For example, *General* or *General Atkinson*, *Doctor* or *Doctor Philips* etc. A person can also be addressed with the name of their position prefixed by an honorific, i.e. *Mr. President*, *Mr. Chancellor* etc. Persons of high importance and ecclesiastically supreme positions are addressed as *Your Highness, Your Majesty, Your Royal Highness, Your Excellency, My Lord/ Lady* and so on.

Bangla language uses both honorific prefixes and suffixes. The honorifics used in the workplace are different from those used by non-professionals. Following the English honorific rules, in Bangla, people address each other as '*Mister*' (abbreviated as Mr.), unmarried women are addressed as *Miss* (abbreviated as *Ms*.) and married women as *Missus* (abbreviated as *Mrs.*). Surnames or first names are prefixed by them. For example, *Mr. X Chowdhury* is addressed as *Mr. Chowdhury* or *Mr. X* and *Mrs. Y Khan* as *Mrs. Y* or *Mrs. Khan*.

In Bangla, *Saheb* is a commonplace honorific used for males by suffixing their names (i.e., X *saheb*) while *Begum* is used for the opposite gender. *Saheb* and *Janab* are usually used for addressing Muslim males whereas *Babu* is used for males of other religions. They are suffixes used both as address forms and as honorifics. For females other than Muslims, *Debi* (meaning *female deity*) is suffixed as a common honorific. For females in workplace settings, *Madam* or *Apa* are used as honorifics by suffixing the person's name (i.e., Y *Madam* or Y *Apa*). Using *Miss* is dated now. Women are addressed neither as *Ms*. nor *Mrs.*, rather *Miz* is used which is close to *Miss* and widely accepted in social media, public events and business letters. This is due to a philanthropic measure of the society to respond to the women's choice to remain youthful forever (Du, 1999). However, in Bangladesh *Mrs.* is still used to address married women. It happens when educated and elite classes interact in a very formal environment. Usually, in less formal settings, people in Bangla like to address others with some common kinship terms like *Bhai* (brother), *Bhabi* (sister-in-law) or *Apa* (elder sister). Friends are usually addressed by their names but their spouses are addressed as *Bhai, Bhaia* or *Bhabi*.

Addressing unknown persons with kinship terms considering age and gender is a popular custom in Bangladesh. Unknown males are addressed as *Bhai*, *Chacha* or *Dadu* (brother, uncle and grandfather) according to their age. Depending on age, unknown females are addressed as *Apa*, *Chachi* or *Dadi* (sister, aunty and grandmother). However, in these days, *uncle* and *aunty* are more frequently used to address unknown or casually known individuals, irrespective of their age. Neighbours and non-relatives are also addressed using various kinship terms, taking into account their age, sex, and social position. Addressing seniors, relatives or non-relatives, by their names or with a combination of title and surname is generally considered disrespectful and impolite. Typically, two types of address terms are observed: kinship and social. Kinship address forms are used by those who maintain kinship ties, while social address forms are applied in social situations to build relationships (Shu-xin, 2004).

Some foreign address terms are also used in Bangla, such as sir, *boss*, *madam*, and *teacher*. *Sir* is used by students to address teachers, employees for employers, lower officials for higher officials, salespersons for customers, patients for physicians, service providers for service receivers etc. Apart from that, *sir* is used to address seniors who are respectable, learned, renowned or possess a higher social position. *Madam* is used to address females in the aforementioned cases. Unknown males and females are sometimes addressed as *sir* and *madam,* although kinship terms are more popular and expected in those cases.

6.3   Use of Address Pronouns

Address terms vary from language to language, and address pronouns are important aspects of address terms. For example, the English language is dependent on nominal forms and most of its dialects lack a distinction in address pronouns (Dickey, 1997). Personal pronouns are not prevalent in the Japanese language because they are not well developed and are used in a limited way (Yusuf *et al*, 2019; Seongha, 2019; Hassall, 2013; Barke & Uehara, 2005; Maynard, 1997; Mogi, 2002; Suzuki 1973; Takubo, 1997). This is in contrast to English and many other European languages, where using personal pronouns is a common practice in address forms (ibid.). The Bangla language boasts a rich variety of address pronouns that denote relationship structure, status and power dynamics, intimacy levels, as well as local and social norms of relationship building. The use of address pronouns can be explained with Brown and Gilman's (1960) T-V distinction. In Bangla, the variation of second-person pronouns is noteworthy. This language uses three forms of the second person: *apni*, *tumi* and *tui*, all meaning *you*. However, *you* is not used indiscriminately as in English. Instead, the difference lies in their being 'honorific', 'ordinary' and 'inferior or intimate' respectively (Das, 1968). In contrast, in the Indonesian language, *you* is only used to address someone of the same rank or younger. The Indonesian translation of *you* is *anda* which is used in very formal settings, like meetings or seminars. If two people use *anda* in their conversation, it implies that either they do not have a close relationship or that one of them is trying to create distance between them. (Situmorang, 2018).

Table 2: Equivalent structure of using honorifics, names and kinship terms in Bangla and English.

No.	Use of Bangla address terms	Use of English address terms
1	i. Neighbor, colleague or non-relatives (formal): (H+ FN/LN/T+ S) *Mr. X, apni kemon achen?* Or, *X saheb, apni kemon achen?* ii. Friends, juniors or colleagues of same age (casual): *X, tumi kemon acho?* iii. Friends, juniors (most intimate and casual): *X, tui kemon achis?*	(H+ FN/LN/T+ S) *Mr. X /X, how are you?*
2	i. FN+ Kinship terms (Chacha, kaka, mama, khalu etc.) in third person reference ─ *X chacha asben.* ii. Only kinship terms in second person addressing ─ *Chacha, apni ki asben?*	i. FN+ Kinship terms in third person reference -- *Uncle X will come.* ii. FN+ Kinship terms in second person addressing -*Uncle X, will you come?*

Note: H= Honorific, FN= First Name, LN= Last Name, T= Title, S= Sentence

Seniors, both male and female, are addressed as *apni*, whereas *tumi* and *tui* are used for juniors and peers. However, it also depends on the level of intimacy. *Apni* is used for the less intimate relationships, *tumi* for slightly more intimate in relationships, and *tui* for relationships that are much deeper and closer. This variance in address pronouns is due to the discrepancy in social and power relationships. People from the upper class address those from the lower and working classes with *tumi* or *tui*, irrespective of age, to demarcate their difference in status. Similarly, individuals from the lower classes, due to factors such as social position, economic status and education, address those from the upper classes as *apni*'-, irrespective of age. The difference in these address pronouns stems from the class practice prevalent in the medieval feudal social system which has been transmitted to modern society. Variation is also evident in the use of third-person pronoun. *She*y and *tini* are used for both *he* and *she*, serving as standard and honorific forms respectively. *O* and *e* are used to refer to a person with more endearment.

7.   **Conclusion**

Address terms and honorifics form part of *social deixis* which refers to the social roles played by an individual in a speech event (Keshavarz, 2001). Bangla address terms demonstrate the cultural and social practices and traditions of the language community, its family structure, its historical

standpoint and the hierarchical mindset it perpetuates. The diversity and multiplicity in this language's modes of address attest to the richness of the address terms. The present study of Bangla address terms reveals that these terms reflect the relationships of the users of this language within its socio-economic structure. Showing respect to seniors and superiors through address terms is a strictly maintained practice here. In response to the first research question, the findings suggest that speakers of Bangla language follow a hierarchy in which older individuals and those with higher social dignity and position are addressed using specific address terms, honorifics and address pronouns. Although economic status, education and age are key variables, the manner of addressing someone can sometimes be completely context specific. In-group and out-group behaviors also play a vital role in determining the way others are addressed. Address terms differ when the speakers are within a social group compared to when they are not, establishing social identities of both the addresser and the addressee. In response to the second research question, the study finds a norm of using kinship terms in address forms, revealing a prevalent tendency among Bangla speakers to establish relationships. Non-relatives, neighbours, strangers and recently acquainted individuals are addressed using kinship terms, taking into account their age and gender. This is because, in Bangladesh, society is based on strong family bonds, and using kinship terms when addressing people is a tradition. The address terms in Bangla clearly denote age, sex, social status, religion, bilateral relationship, solidarity and power-distance among speakers. The variations in using names, titles and address pronouns reveal that people here distinguish between occupational and non-occupational, formal and informal, and intimate and formal contexts. As such, the mood and relationship between speakers can easily be analysed from the use of address terms in a discourse.

The study delineates the role of address terms in defining the structure of interpersonal and intercultural relationships and communication modes in Bangla. It paves the way for future research in this field that will contribute to the understanding and knowledge of Bangla address terms.

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