

Linguistics

Analysis of Formal and Informal Address in Western and Eastern Cultures on the Material of English and Turkish Languages

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ABSTRACT. In sociolinguistics distinction between formal and informal address is a contrast within one language, between various forms of addressing that are specialized for varying levels of politeness, social distance, courtesy, familiarity, age etc. This is mostly vivid when languages greatly differ from each other. The presented article deals with those similarities and differences that may be observed in the two languages – English and Turkish. The scrupulous analysis, based upon the historical-comparative and typological research methods, has revealed those diachronic changes that Formal and Informal Address in English and Turkish have undergone during the centuries. Namely, since Old English via Early Middle English up to the second half of the thirteenth and during the sixteenth centuries. After 1600, these changes in Standard English were confined to literary and religious contexts or as a consciously archaic usage. The distinction was still well preserved when Shakespeare began writing at the end of the sixteenth century. As for Turkish, here, Formal and Informal Address stays still strong, friends and family members as well as adults use the second singular person to speak to one another and to address minors. In formal situations (meeting people first time, business, customer-clerk, colleagues) second plural is used widely. In very formal situations double plural second person may be used to refer to a very respected person. Rarely, third plural conjugation of the verb (but not the pronoun) may be used to emphasize utmost respect. In imperative, there are three forms: second singular person for informal, 2nd plural person for formal and double plural 2nd person for very formal situations. The very formal forms are not frequently used. In conclusion, it should be noted the presented paper is an attempt to link these digressions of behaviour to literacy and essential skills, as well as to the other aspects of language phenomenon in different cultures for further and thorough long-run investigation. © 2015 Bull. Georg. Natl. Acad. Sci.

Key words: *pronominal systems, politeness, similarities, language phenomenon*

Address term systems and their diachronic developments are discussed in a wide range of the world languages. Most of them focus on pronominal sys-

tems, and in particular on the criteria that govern the choices between a more intimate and a more distant or polite pronoun, as for instance “**thou**” and “**you**”

in Early Modern English, “**vos**” and “**vuestra merced**” in the sixteenth century Spanish or “**du**” and “**Sie**” in Modern German, etc.

In the Early Modern English, *thou* was the singular and *you* was the plural. Plural *you* came to be used as a polite form of address (similar to the French *vous*, which is also used for the plural), but over time this polite form became more and more common, eventually displacing the singular *thou* altogether. This explains a peculiarity of traditional Quaker speech, which one often hears in films set in the early Americas. The Quakers opposed making any distinctions of rank, so they insisted on addressing everyone as *thou*, not as *you*. The irony is that today we perceive *thou* to be archaic and formal, while the original intent is to be more informal. We do not know, if there was any politeness distinction in PIE (Play · Invent · Explore). In any case, the distinctions that exist in the modern European languages are not inherited from PIE, since the oldest recorded IE languages (Latin, Greek, Sanskrit) did not have separate polite pronouns. The current European system apparently began with the late Roman Emperors and became widespread in the Middle Ages. There is one vestige of the formality left, although it is not very common — the practice of addressing someone in the third person to convey deference: “**Would sir care to have his meal at six o’clock?**” [1: 307-310]

It is not unlike the Spanish use of “**usted**”, where you also use the third person conjugation of the verb.

The “**Thee**” and “**Thou**” thing goes back to the Feudal period, when nobles talked to peasants. It ended with the rise of merchant middle classes in the 16th and 17th centuries, though the Quakers still continued the custom. The Slavic and Romance languages and German were more conservative and did not abolish those distinctions. Of course, feudalism or some vestiges of it lasted longer in many countries, where these languages were spoken, than it did in England. **Thou** represents the expected outcome of Old English þú, which, with expected Germanic lengthening of the vowel in an open syllable, repre-

sents Indo-European **tu**. **Thou** is therefore cognate with Latin, French, Spanish, Catalan, Italian, Latvian, Portuguese, and Romanian **tu**, modern German, Norwegian and Danish **du**, Russian **ты (ty)**, and Persian **تو (to)**. A cognate form of this pronoun exists in almost every other Indo-European language. Anyway, the reason that “**thou**” died out in English, is purely linked to lexical drift in English, in particular, with respect to change in the level of familiarity required for it to be socially “safe” to use “**thou**” [3].

What happened is that “**thou**” became increasingly informal in nature, and as it was often “safer”, to be more formal, than to be less formal, “**you**” came to be used in a wider range of contexts and “**thou**” came to be used in a more limited range of contexts. Over time, “**thou**” became simply too informal to use in most contexts in everyday speech, and consequently was simply supplanted by “**you**”. **Thou**, contrary to popular belief, has not left the English language and is still found in some accents of England, but is hardly found at all in other English-speaking countries. Most modern English speakers think of “**thou**” as a relic of Shakespeare’s day. **Thou** is a second person singular pronoun of the English language. **Thou** is the nominative case; the oblique/objective (functioning as both accusative and dative) is **thee**, and the genitive is **thy** or **thine** [4].

In modern English **thou** continues to be used only in some of the regional dialects of England, some religious contexts (referring to God when capitalized) and in certain specific phrases, e.g. “**holier than thou**”, “**fare thee well**”. Otherwise, its contemporary use is an archaism. “**You**” being the English equivalent of the French formal “**Vous**” shows that English is a much polite language, than most other European languages [5].

Usage

When **thou** was in common use, personal pronouns had standardized declension according to the following Table: [6]

So now, English mainly got rid of all the singular ones and has just kept the plural and formal ones -

Table 1

1st person	
(singular)	(plural)
Nominative – I Objective – Me Genitive – My/Mine Possessive – Mine	Nominative – We Objective – Us Genitive – Our Possessive – Ours
2nd person	
(singular informal)	(plural or singular formal)
Nominative – Thou Objective – Thee Genitive – Thy/Thine Possessive – Thine	Nominative – Ye Objective – You Genitive – Your Possessive – Yours

you, your, yours - except **ye**.

The Elizabethans said things such as:

“**I will give thee an apple**” (singular informal) (Mostly extinct)

“**I will give you an apple**” (plural) or (singular formal) (Modern English)

“**That apple is thine**” (singular) (Mostly extinct)

“**That apple is yours**” (plural or singular formal) (Modern English)

So now, we use “**yours**” for **EVERYONE**, and it is plural and singular. But it used to be that “**yours**” was used only for plural or singular formal and “**thine**” was used at any other time.

Let us look at another language. Turkish, like many other languages (but unlike English) has both formal and informal forms of addressing:

How are you?

Informal - **Nasilsin?**

Formal - **Nasilsiniz?**

Are you fine?

Informal - **Iyi misin?**

Formal - **Iyi misiniz?**

Thanks/Thank you

Informal - **Tesekkurler** or **Sagol** (g is silent)

Formal - **Tesekkur ederim** or **Sagolun** (g is silent)

Turkish has two words for the first name of a person

- **isim** or **ad** - and they can both be used at any time as they are interchangeable. In Turkish there are two ways of addressing people - informal and polite, like in German, French or Russian. Turkish has two “**you**” verb forms which denote the relationship the speaker has to someone else. For formal address the plural form of second person “**siz**” should be used, while for informal address the singular form of the second person “**sen**” is used. **en** - *you* (singular) - is used for friends, children and family, whilst - **siz** - *you* (plural)” is used for politeness, strangers and to show respect (Similar to “vous.” as used in French.) [7]

For instance, a child instead of saying “**My teacher, the head is calling you**” - (which uses - **sen** - friendly, intimate), would say “**My teacher, the head is calling you**” - (using - **siz** - polite, respectful). The Turkish word for surname is **soyadı** - there is no corresponding word for surname based in the word **isim** **İsminiz ne?** - *What is your first name?*

İsmim Ayşe. - *My name is Ayşe.*

isim - *name* - becomes - **ism-iniz** - *your name* and **ism-im** - *my name*.

This is one of the nouns that “apocopate” (ie: loses an internal vowel)

Adınız ne? - *What is your first name?*

Adım Ali - *My name is Ali.*

Table 2

Singular	Plural
ben - <i>I</i>	biz - <i>we</i>
sen - <i>you</i> - [familiar]	siz - <i>you</i> - [plural and formal singular]
o - <i>He, she, it</i>	onlar - <i>they</i>

Table 3

The Second Person Singular (familiar)	The Second Person Plural (polite/formal/public)
sen - <i>you</i>	siz - <i>you</i>
sana - <i>to you</i> - (irregular) - [NOT sene]	size - <i>to you</i>
senin - <i>of you, your</i>	sizin - <i>your</i>
seni - <i>you</i> (obj.)	sizi - <i>you</i> (obj.)
sende - <i>on you</i>	sizde - <i>on you</i>
senden - <i>from you</i>	sizden - <i>from you</i>
seninle or senle - <i>with you</i>	sizinle or sizle - <i>with you</i>

Table 4. Finding out about a Third Person

The Third Person Singular	The Third Person Plural
o - <i>he, she, it</i>	onlar - <i>they</i>
ona - <i>to him, her, it</i> -	onlara - <i>to them</i>
onun - <i>of him, his, her, its</i>	onların - <i>their</i>
onu - <i>him, her, it</i> (obj.)	onları - <i>them</i> (obj.)
onda - <i>on him, her, it</i>	onlarda - <i>on them</i>
ondan - <i>from him, her, it</i>	onlardan - <i>from them</i>
onunla or onla - <i>with him, her, it</i>	onlarla - <i>with them</i>

Soyadınız ne? - *What is your surname?*

Soyadım Karaca - *My surname is Karaca.*

The Third person spelling changes, all extended forms of - **o** - use buffer letter -**n**-. The third person singular pronoun - **o** - *he, she, it* - adds letter -**n**- to become - **on**- when adding further suffixes. The third person plural is also irregular becoming - **onlar** - *they*. When adding the -**le/la** suffix **ben(im)le**, **sen(in)le**, **on(un)la**, **biz(im)le**, **siz(in)le** are alternatives. The third person plural **onlarla** is the only alternative, however. It is not correct to say onlarýnla. [8: 24-39, 9: 252-282]

The third person suffix is -**i** or -**ı** meaning - *his, her, its*

Onun ismi ne? - *What is his name?*

Onun ismi Mehmet - *His name is Mehmet.*

Onun adı ne? - *What is her name?*

Onun adı Deren - *Her name is Deren.*

Onun soyadı ne? - *What is his surname?*

Onun soyadı Gürses - *His surname is Gürses.*

If we are talking about a third person remote from us we may ask the question: **What is that man's name?** In this case we must translate the words "man's name" correctly by using the Possessive Relationship to show that the two words belong to each other.

adamın ismi - *the man's name* - [Lit: the name of the man]

adamın adı - *the man's name*

adamın soyadı - *the man's surname*

O Beyefendinin soyadı ne? - *What is that gentleman's surname?* - [Lit: the surname of the man]

O Beyefendinin ismi ne? - *What is that gentleman's name?*

If we want to make the sentence more conversational we would normally say : *I wonder what that lady's name is?* *I wonder* is simply translated by adding the word - **acaba** - at the beginning or end of the Turkish question.

O Hanımefendinin adı ne, acaba? - *I wonder what that lady's name is?*

Acaba, Mehmet'in soyadı ne? - *I wonder what Mehmet's surname is?*

Kız kardeşinizin ismi ne, acaba? - *What is your sister's name, I wonder?*

In conclusion, with all these words that we would have had to try and decide which to use, we can see why English dropped most of them, and how much of a nightmare it is for the native speakers of others languages, such as French and Italian, that still have

them. English has mainly got rid of all the singular ones and has just kept the plural and formal ones - **you, your, yours** - except **ye**.

Even in contemporary Turkish, the T-V distinction is strong. Family members and friends speak to one another using the second-person singular **sen**, and adults use **sen** to address minors. In formal situations (business, customer-clerk, and colleague relationships, or meeting people for the first time) the plural second-person **siz** is used almost exclusively. In very formal situations, the double plural second-

person **sizler** may be used to refer to a much-respected person. Rarely, the third-person plural form of the verb (but not the pronoun) may be used to emphasize utmost respect. In the imperative, there are three forms: second person singular for informal, second person plural for formal, and second person double plural for very formal situations: **gel** (second person singular, informal), **gelin** (second person plural, formal), and **geliniz** (double second person plural, very formal). The very formal forms are not frequently used.

ენათმეცნიერება

ოფიციალური და არაოფიციალური მიმართვის ფორმათა ანალიზი დასავლურ და აღმოსავლურ კულტურათა წიაღში

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(წარმოდგენილია აკადემიის წევრის ა. არაბულის მიერ)

სოციოლინგვისტიკაში განსხვავება მიმართვის ოფიციალურ და არაოფიციალურ ვარიანტებს შორის აღიქმება როგორც მიმართვის ფორმათა მრავალფეროვნება ერთი ენის ფარგლებში, რომელიც ორიენტირებულია კომუნიკაციის პროცესში სხვადასხვა დონეზე თავაზიანობის, სოციალური კუთვნილების, პატივისცემის, მოსაუბრეთა ასაკის მინიშნებისა და ა.შ. ხაზგასასმელად. ეს განსაკუთრებით ნათლად მაშინ წარმოჩნდება, როდესაც ენებს შორის სხვაობა მკვეთრად თვალში საცემია. წინამდებარე სტატია სწორედ იმ მსგავსებებისა და განსხვავებების გამოვლენას ეძღვნება, რომლებსაც შესაძლებელია ადგილი ჰქონოდა საანალიზოდ შერჩეული ინგლისური და თურქული ენების წიაღში. გამოწვლილვითმა კვლევამ, რომელიც ისტორიულ-შედარებითი და ტიპოლოგიური შესწავლის მეთოდებს ეყრდნობოდა, გამოავლინა ის დიაქრონიული ცვლილებები, რომლებიც მიმართვის ოფიციალურმა და არაოფიციალურმა ფორმებმა განიცადა საუკუნეების განმავლობაში. კერძოდ, ძველი ინგლისურიდან საშუალო ინგლისურის გავლით მე-13 ს. მეორე ნახევრიდან მე-16 ს. განმავლობაში. 1600 წლის შემდგომ აღნიშნული ცვლილებები, სტანდარტულ

ინგლისურში, უმთავრესად ლიტერატურული და რელიგიური სახიათის ტექსტებში ფიქსირდებოდა, როგორც არქაული ფორმები. მიმართვის ფორმათა შორის განსხვავება კარგად შემოინახა უ. შექსპირის ქმნილებებმაც მე-16 საუკუნეში. რაც შეეხება თურქულ ენას, მასში მიმართვის ოფიციალურ და არაოფიციალურ ფორმათა შორის განსხვავება ამჟამადაც მკაფიოდაა შენარჩუნებული. მეგობრები და ოჯახის წევრები, ისევე როგორც უფროსი თაობის წარმომადგენლები, ურთიერთშორის საუბრისას მხოლოდითი რიცხვის მეორე პირის ფორმას იყენებენ. იმავე ფორმით მიმართავენ ისინი უმცროსი ასაკის თანამოსაუბრეთაც. ოფიციალურ სიტუაციებში (იგულისხმება: პირველი შეხვედრა პიროვნებასთან, საქმიანი ურთიერთობის სფერო, კოლეგებს შორის საუბარი) ფართოდ გამოიყენება მეორე პირის მრავლობითი ფორმა. ძალზე ოფიციალურ სიტუაციებში მეორე პირის ორმაგი მრავლობითის ფორმას იყენებენ პიროვნებისადმი უსაზღვრო პატივისცემის გამოსახატად. იშვიათად, პიროვნებისადმი ღრმა პატივისცემის გადმოსაცემად შესაძლებელია ზმნის უღლების მესამე მრავლობითის გამოყენებაც. ბრძანებითის გადმოსაცემად კი სამი ფორმა არსებობს: მხოლოდითის მეორე (არაოფიციალურ სიტუაციაში), მრავლობითის მეორე და ორმაგი მრავლობითის მეორე (ოფიციალურ სიტუაციებში). მიმართვათა არაოფიციალური ფორმები არცთუ ისე ხშირად გამოიყენება. დასკვნის სახით უნდა აღინიშნოს, რომ წარმოდგენილი ნაშრომი ერთგვარი მცდელობაა ქცევის მოცემულ ფორმათა წიგნიერებასა და ენობრივი აქტივობის სხვა უნარებთან ურთიერთდაკავშირების გამოვლენის თვალსაზრისით, რომელიც ასევე მკაფიოდ წარმოაჩენს სხვადასხვა კულტურაში ენობრივი ქმედების სხვა ასპექტებსაც, რაც, თავის მხრივ, სამომავლო და ხანგრძლივი, საფუძვლიანი მეცნიერული დაკვირვების საწინდარია.

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