

**ФИЛОЛОГИЯ. ТЕОРЕТИЧЕСКАЯ, ПРИКЛАДНАЯ И
СРАВНИТЕЛЬНО-СОПОСТАВИТЕЛЬНАЯ ЛИНГВИСТИКА
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**КАТЕГОРИИ ФОРМ ОБРАЩЕНИЯ ВО ВЗАИМОДЕЙСТВИИ
ПРЕПОДАВАТЕЛЯ И СТУДЕНТОВ В НИГЕРИЙСКОМ ВАРИАНТЕ
АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА**

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Аннотация. Формы обращения, являясь социолингвистическими параметрами межличностного взаимодействия, различаются в разных языках, культурах и контекстах. Эти различия касаются как набора форм, их категорий, так и функционирования. Особый интерес представляют формы обращения в вариантах английского языка, поскольку они демонстрируют влияние местных языков и культур на заимствованный язык. Цель исследования – определить категории форм обращения, используемые нигерийскими преподавателями в адрес студентов, и выделить социальные, прагматические и культурные факторы, влияющие на их выбор. Были рассмотрены два контекста: формальный (в аудитории) и неформальный (вне аудитории). Материалом послужили данные анкетирования, в котором участвовало 180 студентов из 10 нигерийских университетов, и этнографические наблюдения. Данные были проанализированы качественно и количественно с использованием интерактивной социолингвистики, теории форм обращения, лингвопрагматики, теории вежливости и культурологии. Результаты показали, что, помимо имен собственных, которые являются наиболее часто используемой категорией, преподаватели нигерийских университетов используют в адрес студентов также культурно-специфичные категории, включающие термины родства, текнонимы, описательные формы обращения, названия кланов и географические названия. Исследование также выявило контекстуальную вариативность форм обращения, сдвиг в использовании обращений в формальном и неформальном контекстах: культурно-специфичные формы обращения используются чаще в неформальном контексте, чем в формальном, выступая как средство реализации стратегий сближения. Выявленные категории и их функционирование указывают на особенности нигерийской культуры и идентичности, такие как семейная ориентация, принадлежность к группе, близость и солидарность. Полученные результаты способствуют пониманию влияния культуры на формы обращения в нигерийском варианте английского языка в ситуации многоязычной академической среды.

Ключевые слова: формы обращения; категории форм обращения; взаимодействие преподавателя и студента; лингвокультурная идентичность; академический дискурс; нигерийский вариант английского языка

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CATEGORIES OF ADDRESS FORMS IN TEACHER-STUDENT INTERACTIONS IN NIGERIAN ENGLISH

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Abstract. Address forms, which are sociolinguistic parameters in interpersonal communication, differ across languages, cultures and contexts. These differences relate to both the set of forms and their usage. The study aims to identify the categories of address forms used by Nigerian university teachers to students, and to highlight the social, pragmatic and cultural factors that influence their choice. Two contexts were explored: formal (in-class) and informal (out-of-class). The materials for the study were collected through questionnaires with participation of 180 Nigerian students from 10 universities. The data were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively, using interactional sociolinguistics, theory of address terms, pragmatics, politeness and cultural studies. The findings showed that Nigerian university teachers use several categories of address terms when speaking to their students. In addition to names, which is the most frequently used address category, they also use culture-specific categories including kinship terms, teknonyms, descriptive terms, clan names and geographical names. The study also revealed some variation in the use of these terms depending on the context, with a marked shift in patterns between classroom and non-classroom settings. In informal settings, culture-specific forms of address are more common than in formal settings. These forms act as a means of implementing rapprochement strategies. The identified categories and their usage indicate certain features of Nigerian culture and identity, such as family orientation, ingroup affiliation, closeness and solidarity. The study contributes to the understanding of the impact of culture on address forms and their functioning in Nigerian English, particularly in a multilingual academic setting.

Keywords: address forms; address categories; teacher-student interaction; lingua-cultural identity; academic discourse; Nigerian English

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1. Introduction

The address forms (AFs hereafter) and their usage are a vivid example of the interaction between language, culture, society, cognitive processes and communication, which are at the heart of modern linguistic research, characterized by the anthropocentric approach [1, 2, 3, among many others]. AFs are highly context-dependent linguistic practices that are essential for effective communication in various contexts, including academic environments, which are becoming increasingly

multicultural [4, 5, 6]. However, the studies of AFs in African academic settings, particularly in Nigerian one, are not numerous [e.g., 7, 8, 9]. A systematic investigation of the address categories functioning, as well as sociolinguistic factors that influence AFs in Nigerian classroom interactions represent a significant gap in the existing literature.

Thus, this study aims to identify the categories of AFs used by teachers to students in Nigerian multilingual academic settings and to reveal the social, pragmatic and cultural factors that impact their choice.

The paper attempts to address the following research questions:

- 1) What categories of address forms do Nigerian teachers use addressing their students?
- 2) Do address categories in teacher-student interaction differ in formal and informal situations?
- 3) What socio-cultural values are encoded in Nigerian English address forms used in teacher-student interaction?

2. Address forms in a multilingual context

The study of AFs in Nigerian English is complicated due to the fact that the Nigerian sociolinguistic landscape is characterized by a rich diversity of languages, with over 500 indigenous languages coexisting with English which serves as the official language and medium of instruction in higher education institutions.

The English language has a status of an official language in Nigeria alongside with the major indigenous languages such as Yoruba (spoken in the south of the country), Igbo (spoken in the East) and Hausa (spoken in the north). Kachru's [10] three-circle model classifies Nigerian English as an Outer Circle variety, where English serves as an official and second language in a multilingual context. Nigerian English is described as "the variety or varieties of English used in Nigeria, characterised by phonological, lexical, and grammatical features that reflect the influence of Nigerian indigenous languages and the socio-cultural context of its speakers." [11, p.7]. Emphasising the influence of indigenous languages and the socio-cultural con-

text of its speakers on English, this definition lacks the usage of English varieties, their pragma-discursive characteristics.

However, Nigerian linguistic landscape is marked by functional multilingualism, where speakers easily code-switch and codemix between English, Nigerian Pidgin and indigenous languages depending on context, interlocutor and communicative purpose [12]. Akujobi and Umoh [13] highlight the emergence of distinct varieties of Nigerian English, each carrying sociolinguistic implications for communication patterns and social identity construction. These varieties reflect not merely phonological or lexical differences but encode deeper cultural values regarding hierarchy, respect, and social distance that fundamentally shape address behavior [14]. These attitudes significantly affect communicative practices and influence individual language choices [15].

The categories of AFs used by Nigerians in their communicative practice emphasize not only the linguistic diversity of their language, but also the inability of the adopted language, such as English, to fully express their cultural ideologies and worldviews [see also 16]. Thus, the AFs used in Nigerian English are derived from the diverse indigenous languages, which convey the sociocultural values, norms, linguacultural identities, cultural pragmatics, beliefs and social relationships of Nigeria in the English language. Consequently, they contribute to the development of an English variety known as Nigerian English. These AFs represent a clear example of the linguistic and cultural adaptation and naturalization of English in Nigeria.

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to identify the address categories employed by teachers in teacher-student interaction in Nigerian multicultural university setting and underscore the social, pragmatic and cultural factors that influence their choice.

The materials for the study were primarily collected through questionnaires. To enhance the reliability of the findings, the questionnaires were also supplemented by ethnographic observations. The designed questionnaire was randomly distributed among 10 Nigerian universities, and responses from 180 Nigerian students were col-

lected. The data were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively, drawing on interactional sociolinguistics, pragmatics, the theory of address research, as well as cultural studies. The analysis was conducted within two contexts: in class (formal context) and outside class (informal context).

3. Results and discussion

The results revealed that teachers employ several categories of Afs which demonstrate some contextual variation. In addition to names, which is the most frequently used category of addressing students, they use culture-specific categories, such as kinship terms, teknonyms, descriptives, clan names and geographical names (see Table 1).

Table 1: Address categories in teacher-student interaction

Categories	Context	
	In class %	Outside class %
Names	67	39
First names	15	20
Surnames	30	6
First name+surname	17	4
Nicknames	5	9
Culture-specific categories	33	61
Kinship terms	13.8	27.2
Descriptive terms	10.7	16
Clan names	3.5	7.9
Teknonyms	2.6	5.8
Geographical names	2.4	4.1
TOTAL	100	100

The results demonstrate that the most frequently employed category of address terms in teacher-student interactions within Nigerian academic settings comprises names (67% in class and 39% out of class). They are first names (the individual's unique given identifier), e.g. *Seth*, *Adamu*, *John*, surnames (patronymic, or family names), e.g. *Ewan*, *Musa*, *Chukwuemake* or a combination of first name + surname, e.g. *Seth Ewan*, *Adamu Musa*, *John Chukwuemake*, and nicknames (an informal

identifier, often a shorten form of one's given name or based on traits or hobbies), e.g. *Abraham - A.B, Elizabeth – Eli, Ronaldo, foodie*.

In classroom contexts, teachers predominantly address students by their names (67%) with some variation depending on their communicative intention. To maintain formality surnames (30 %) or the combination of first name + family name (17%) are used. The teacher-student relationship remains largely formal, with students identified by their names. To establish some familiarity, teachers use first names (15%) and nicknames (5%).

The findings reveal that the second most preferred address category in teacher-student interactions are kinship terms. Contrary to practices in Western cultures, Nigerian teachers address students using kinship terms such as *son, daughter, Nwa m* (my child for both male and female in Igbo), and *Yata/Dana* (daughter/son in Hausa) to convey affection, concern, and to emphasize sociocultural values such as family orientation, collectivist ideology and in-group solidarity. The use of kinship terms signifies a shift from an official setting to a communal mindset. Notably, 27.2% of teachers prefer kinship terms outside the classroom, compared to only 13.8% within the classroom. This indicates their informality as a stylistic feature.

Teknonyms which are conventional kinship-based practices of identifying parents by their children's name (e.g. *maman Sissmeon* 'mother of Simeon', *babban Fawaz* 'father of Fawaz') are also used to some extent in addressing the students who have children. The results show minimal use of teknonyms in the classroom while it doubles outside the class (2.6% to 5.8%). As Khalil and Larina state [17, p.3] "teknonyms are markers of politeness in cultures with we-orientation and we-identity", however, their pragmatic meaning significantly depends on a context. Thus, teachers address students who have children with teknonyms to minimize distance and create empathy.

The findings also highlight an intriguing category employed by teachers when addressing students, which is descriptive terms based on physical attributes, occupations, skills and attire. For example, teachers might use terms like e.g. *Tallman* (when

addressing a tall student), *Shorty* (for someone who is short), *Motion/Action* (for an active student), *Yellow* (referring to someone with fair skin), *Businesswoman*, among others. This category underscores informality and friendliness towards students. Other times, they serve as a quick way to identify students when the teacher forgets their name due to the large number of students in the class.

The results show that teachers employ other culture-specific terms to address students such as clan names. They link the student to their ancestral lineage. These terms vary across different clans/genealogies and can include names like *Ngai*, *Kal-bang*, *Mabe*, *Ene*, which immediately highlights a student's genealogy. Teachers use clan names to address students with whom they have close personal relationships or are from the same clan. In class, this accounts for 3.2% against 7.5% outside of class. Teachers use these clan names to address students with whom they have close personal relationships.

Geographical terms of address, when teachers address students with the name of their hometowns is a common practice in Nigeria for identification and social bonding. For example, *Lagosian* may be used for students from Lagos, a large metropolitan city in southwestern Nigeria, and *Zagon Kataf* is used for students from Zagon Kataf, a local government area in southern Kaduna State. In our data such addresses were not frequent and recorded 2.4% in a formal context and 4.1% in an informal context.

The study found some differences in how the address categories are used in formal and informal situations. The findings show that 67% of teachers address students with names inside the classroom, while 33% use culture-specific categories. However, outside the classroom, the trend is reversed, with the use of names declining to 39%, while the use of culture-specific categories increases to 61%. This suggests that in less formal settings, such as those outside the academic world, where the formal academic hierarchy is less strict, primordial identities like ethnicity and ancestry can be more prominent and influential as forms of social identity.

Conclusion

This study identified six categories of address forms employed by teachers addressing their students in Nigerian English. In addition to traditional name category including first names, nicknames, surnames, or full names, they include culture-specific categories such as kinships, teknonyms, descriptives, clan names and geographical names. These categories encode the Nigerian we-identity and its characteristic values, such as closeness, solidarity, community and family orientation.

The findings revealed some contextual variation in the use of these categories, the marked shift in address patterns between classroom and non-classroom settings. Names dominate in classroom settings, reflecting institutional formality and the strategic negotiation of relational distance. Culture-specific categories are more typical of informal contexts though they are also used in class. The decline in formal naming practices and the rise in culture-specific categories, suggests that academic formality temporarily suppresses, rather than erases, linguacultural identities.

The study contributes to understanding the impact of culture on AFs in multilingual academic environments and highlights the integration of sociolinguistic, pragmatic, cultural and communication research.

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**Раскрытие информации о конфликте
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