

# ARTICLES

**Isa Yusuf Chamo**

Bayero University, Kano

## The use of address forms among faculty academic staff of Bayero University, Kano

### Abstract

This paper investigates the use of address forms among the academic staff of the Faculty of Arts and Islamic Studies at the Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria. The aim is to find out whether there is variation in the use of the terms between the members of academic staff of the Faculty which has six Departments (Arabic, English, History, Islamic Studies and Sharia, Nigerian Languages, Linguistics and Foreign Languages). An ethnography research method and the Variationist Sociolinguistics Theory are used to collect and analyze the data. Following the findings, three address forms are presented in more detail, namely titles, nicknames, and kinship terms. Special attention is put to the title *Malam*, which originally referred to a teacher or a person versed in Islamic knowledge, but nowadays is used more commonly than any other type of address forms. The research shows that age, gender, social status, degree of intimacy, and context of communication determine the use of the address forms among academic staff. The findings reveal that the staff members of the Faculty favor traditional address terms which are used in Hausa society rather than the terms corresponding to their professional rank. In addition, these address forms are culture specific and the dominant culture is Hausa.

**Keywords:** address form, title, nickname, kinship term, Hausa, Bayero University, Kano

## 1. Introduction

Address forms or terms of address are linguistic forms used in addressing others to attract their attention or to refer to them in the course of a conversation. Address forms are a social phenomenon. They are significant for effective and successful communication and have long been considered a very salient indicator of the status of relationships. Because of a series of social factors, address forms vary in different situations (Yang 2010). Learning how people address one another in a certain language is an important issue in studying communication and hence establishing social relationships between individuals. Linguistic scholars consider the study of address terms a fruitful field for sociolinguistics due to the fact that it shows how interpersonal relationships can be socially and strategically constructed (Fitch 1991, Morford 1997).

Scholars define the address forms based on the theoretical background they adopt and the direction of research they conduct, but their definitions are similar. For instance Fitch (1991: 255) states that "Personal address terms are a ubiquitous feature that reflects a universal communicative activity: speakers addressing and referring to each other". Oyetade (1995: 515) asserts that "address forms are words or expressions used to designate the person being talked to while talk is in progress". Keevallik (1999: 125) writes that "address forms are a sensitive means of expressing social relations between interlocutors". Carl (2000: 12) defines address forms as "a communicative activity in which speakers address or refer to each other". Aful (2006a) maintains that "terms of address constitute an important part of verbal behavior through which the behavior, norms and practices of a society can be identified".

Sociolinguists generally agree that the usage of address terms is governed by the rules stating which forms are used in which circumstances. Parkinson (1985: 225) emphasizes that "Knowledge of the proper use of terms of address [and reference] is (...) as important to the overall success of communication as knowledge of the conjugation of verbs would be". This paper investigates the use of address forms among the academic staff of the Faculty of Arts and Islamic Studies at the Bayero University, Kano, i.e. the way individual speakers or groups of speakers use the repertory of the address variants available to them. The University setting is multilingual. It comprises people from different ethnic groups in Nigeria and beyond. Also people at the Faculty are of great cultural diversity. The paper's main hypothesis is that social position, intimacy, age and gender determine the form of address used by academic staff in the Faculty. It is also examined to what extent the main sociolinguistic assumption of the address

theory (which holds that the address terms used vary according to speakers and addressee's social characteristics – age, class, gender, religion, and relationship) can be applied to the academic staff of the Faculty.

The study assumes that how well one knows someone, i.e. intimacy/distance towards that person, is crucial in determining one's linguistic choices. The choice of the first name to address someone indicates intimacy, whereas the choice of titles and other address forms shows that the addressee is different from the speaker in terms of age, social status, and occupational rank, etc. or that the relationship between them is not intimate enough for them to be on first names terms. As Holmes (1992: 247) stated, "many factors may contribute to determining the degree of social distance or intimacy between people – relative age, sex, social roles, whether people work together, or are members of the same family and so on".

In the area of studies on the choice and use of forms of address a new form of research has been developed during the last thirty years or so, aiming at the discovery of underlying rules governing address usage in a wide variety of languages (see e.g. Brown & Gilman 1960 work on the theory of power and solidarity that focus on the description of interlocutors' identities exclusively in terms of the conventional demographic variables, such as age, sex, social class, etc.).

The majority of the above mentioned linguistic, socio-linguistic, and other studies, reported in the literature on the address systems in different languages and cultures, have been concerned with the Anglo-American, Euro-Asian, African, Middle East, and Latin American contexts, yet relatively few of them concerned academic speaking communities. Among these few is a study by McIntire (1972) who examined the terms used by students when addressing faculty members of a Social Sciences Department at the West Coast University. Since then, several other studies have been conducted across the globe that show variation in the use of address forms among different societies.

For instance Kiesling (1998) examined 'Dude', a solidarity term used as an identity marker among white American male students in a fraternity. Wong and Leung (2004) studied the address forms used by the students in Hong Kong. The study revealed that, although addressing each other in Chinese is more common nowadays than in the past, students' choice of English address terms reflects an identity predicated on their field of study, the culture of secondary school, and the peer pressure. Li (1997) conducted a similar research among another set of Hong Kong students and obtained similar findings. Anwar (1997) studied the usage of address forms among Malay undergraduate students and found out

that the usage shows the students' Islamic identity. In addition, the studies by Crozier and Dimmock (1999), De Klerk and Bosch (1997, 1999), and Dornyo (2010) on students' naming practices highlighted the use of nicknames as a key form of address used among the students. In particular, De Klerk and Bosch (1999) associated nickname formation with linguistic creativity and verbal playfulness. This view of nicknames is also partially given expression in the work of Dornyo (2010) and Afful (2006b). In addition, Afful (2006a, 2006b, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, Mwinlaaru 2012) studied the address terms usage among the university students in Africa with a particular focus on Ghana. Mwinlaaru (2012) explored the usage of address terms among the Ghanaian students at a public university from various perspectives. The studies focused on the range of forms of address terms, the influence of social variables such as age and gender, the influence of formality, and the construction of multiple identities. Salami (2006) examined the relationship between the use of six selected English taboo words by Nigerian university students and their attitudes towards these words on the one hand, and gender and religion on the other. The study revealed that the gender of a speaker, but not their religion, is important with respect to the use of and attitudes towards the English taboo words. Afful (2007a, 2007b, 2007c) studied the address forms and their variation among the university students in Ghana. The research revealed that students used three key naming practices on campus. Also, the research showed that besides the academic setting, socio-cultural factors, such as gender, mood, domain, purpose of discourse, presence or absence of a third person (usually a lecturer), and the relationship of a participant, influence the use of varied address forms for an addressee.

Therefore, scholars conducted several studies on the address and reference terms usage in the academic institutions. Notable among them include Murphy (1988), who examined the reference terms used by the undergraduate university students in Brown University for faculty and college students. The research revealed that the speaker's choice of reference terms is significant, but is in varying degrees influenced by such factors as speaker–referent relationship, addressee–referent relationship, and the presence of bystanders. The research also discovered that a speaker would often shift from his/her original choice of reference term to adopt a term used by his addressee. Dickey (1997) studied the disjuncture between address forms and reference terms used to an interlocutor in both academic and familial interactions. The research revealed that the students use nicknames, first name (FN) and last name (LN) in informal contexts, while a title plus last name (TLN) in relatively formal contexts. Mwinlaaru (2012) studied students' use of address and reference terms in a University of Cape Coast (UCC)

in Ghana. The research showed that students use three principal forms of address, namely: titles, kinship terms, and nicknames for faculty members. Also, students employ three reference terms, namely titles, personal names, and nicknames. In addition, the choice of reference and address terms by students is influenced by the context of situation and, in varying degrees of salience, the socio-pragmatic variables of gender, age, and status. Moreover, address forms and reference terms used to address the faculty members do not only serve as symbols of power and resistance to power, but are also used to co-construct individual and social identities.

The above literature sheds light on the previous works conducted in the academic settings and contributes to an understanding of the various settings and factors that influence verbal behavior. It vividly shows that, based on the literature reviewed, no work is conducted on the use of address forms among academic staff of any Nigerian University. This justifies the need of conducting this research.

## 2. Methodology

An ethnographic research method was adopted for this study. The ethnographic focal point may include intensive language and culture learning, intensive study of a single field or domain, and a blend of historical, observational and interview methods. Typical ethnographic research employs three kinds of data collection: interviews, observation and documents. This, in turn, produced three kinds of data: quotations, descriptions, and the excerpts of documents resulting in one product: narrative description. This narrative often includes charts, diagrams and additional artefacts that help to tell "the story" (Hammersley 1990). "When used as a method, ethnography typically refers to fieldwork (alternatively, participant-observation) conducted by a single investigator who 'lives with and lives like' those who are studied, usually for a year or more" (Maanen 1996). This method has the potential of enabling the complex layers of the cultural practices of a group of people to be observed and recorded. With the ethnographic approach, we can also source data through the use of multiple data collection techniques and benefit from paying attention to "the localized, microscopic, particular, context-bound features of given settings and cultures" (Baxter 2003: 85).

### 2.1. Research site

The research site for this study was Faculty of Arts and Islamic Studies (FAIS) at the Bayero University, Kano (BUK). The University was established in October 1960 as Abdullahi Bayero College (ABC), a section of the School of Arabic Studies

(SAS) with the primary objectives of preparing Secondary School Certificate holders for the General Certificate of Education (GCE) and Advanced Examination in Arabic, Islamic History, Islamic Studies, Hausa and English Literature. When Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria came into existence in October 1960, the name of the College was changed to Abdullahi Bayero College. The College was affiliated to ABU in 1964 and its post-secondary programmes became preliminary courses through which students were prepared for admission into the new University for degree programmes. As a consequence, the College became the Faculty of Arts and Islamic Studies of ABU and enrolled its first set of 10 students for degree programmes. The College became a semi-autonomous University College of ABU and was named Bayero University College in 1975. At that time, it had four faculties, namely Arts and Islamic Studies, Education, Science, and Social Sciences. The College attained full-fledged University Status on 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1977, when it was renamed Bayero University, Kano.

Today, BUK is structured into eighteen faculties, a College, four schools and over 10 research centres. The eighteen faculties have over 70 Departments, running over 70 undergraduate degree programmes and 122 postgraduate programmes. All the programmes are spread at two main locations: New Site and Old Site. BUK has a population of over 40, 000 regular students drawn from every part of the country, including international students. The students can further be classified into two groups: Undergraduates and Postgraduates. Also, BUK is an English-medium university, given the country's historical ties with Britain. Students and lecturers communicate in English in formal contexts and use Nigerian languages, Hausa in particular, and Pidgin English in informal contexts.

Faculty of Arts and Islamic Studies is the mother of all the faculties of Bayero University, Kano. It started as the Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies with two departments in 1960 and had eight departments in 2015. The number of departments dropped to six in 2016 due to the merger of the Department of Foreign Languages with Linguistics and the transfer of the Department of Theatre and Performing Arts to the newly created Faculty of Communication. Now the six departments are: Arabic, English and Literary Studies, History, Islamic Studies and Shari'a, Linguistics and Foreign Languages, and Nigerian Languages. Currently, the Faculty has a student population of 4080 out of which 2880 are males and 1200 females. This number includes both postgraduate and undergraduate students. In addition, the Faculty has 167 academic staff of various ranks that have been teaching, supervising and mentoring the students (Aliyu 2017).

FAIS was chosen for this study because I find it convenient and easily accessible. Indeed, given that I have been a member of the Faculty for years, I am more familiar with its physical environment and social setting than any other faculty in the University. The academic staff were chosen because of the researcher's familiarity with them and to narrow the scope in order to deeply investigate their verbal behaviour.

## **2.2. Data collection procedure**

A triangulated approach, comprising observation, a semi-structured interview, and introspection, was employed in collecting the data for this study. This combined research design was intended to enhance the reliability and validity of the data. The observation comprised both participant and non-participant observation conducted from December 2015 at various settings of the Departments activities within the Faculty. A deliberate attempt was made to vary the category of participants observed in terms of age, gender, department, and status. The purpose of this variation was to secure a holistic picture of the use of address terms among the Faculty members. A total of 90 dyadic encounters were observed and jotted.

The data derived from the observation were then analysed and the initial findings became the basis for the semi-structured interview, which involved 30 staff, 20 males and 10 females. The interview was meant to be a follow-up to the observation and its purpose was to clarify some issues in the observation data and double check regular patterns that emerged from the observation data. Interviewees were asked to give the address terms they used and the reasons why they used them. The interview guide was very flexible, consisting of a list of topical issues derived from the observation data, so that many of the questions that interviewees were asked emerged from the interaction in the form of follow-up and probing questions. Much of the interview data were jotted. The observation and interview data were supported by the informal discussions and conversations I had with faculty members at offices, outside the offices and on phone. Finally, regarding introspection, the data were supported by my intuitive knowledge of the use of address terms as a member of the Faculty, who had participated in these discursive practices both as student and lecturer.

## **3. Theory used**

The research used the variationist theory as its theoretical framework. It was pioneered in the 1960s by William Labov, who adopted it to investigating the

relationship between language and society and developed a field that has come to be known as “variationist sociolinguistics”. A central doctrine of this field holds that variation is inherent to linguistic structure. The way a language is spoken (and written) differs across individuals as well as across the situations encountered by the same individual. Labov (1969) argued that such differences are not only normal but also necessary to a language’s functioning. Labov’s research demonstrate that linguistic variation is pervasive and highly structured, revealing regular patterns of co-occurrence between language forms, such as the pronunciation of a particular vowel, and social categories, such as socioeconomic classes. Such insights are the result of studying language from a socially realistic perspective that takes into account how a diverse range of speakers uses the language in everyday situations. The central ideas of variationist sociolinguistics are that an understanding of language requires an understanding of variable as well as categorical processes and that the variation witnessed at all the levels of language is not random. Rather, linguistic variation is characterized by orderly or “structured heterogeneity” (Labov 1969: 759).

Contrary to many theories in linguistics which seek for categorical rules to explain the underlying principles in language, the variationist approach claims that language varies systematically in accordance with the social characteristics of the speakers. The very basic question which arises here is that, if language use varies from one situation to another, how can it be described and more importantly explained as a systematic apparatus? The theory was advanced in the work of Trudgill (2002), Eckert (2000), Zhang (2005), and Brown (2006), among others.

## **4. Address forms used in the Faculty**

The data reveal three major address forms that academic staff use in the Faculty. These include titles (occupation related titles and religion related titles), nicknames, and kinship terms. Each type is discussed below.

### **4.1. Titles**

According to the data, the staff of the Faculty of Arts and Islamic Studies used two common titles to address one another. These are occupation- and religion-related titles.

#### **4.1.1. Occupation-related address forms**

Parkinson (1985: 119) defined the occupation- or work-related term of address as the one that a person receives or earns because of the academic degree they



hold or because of the occupation they are engaged in. This type of address form is commonly used among Faculty academic staff members. The prominent among the title categories is the academic title. This is because the research is conducted in an academic institution. With respect to how it is used as an address term, the data showed that one can address his/her recipient by:

- i. Academic title only, e.g. *Doctor, Professor*
- ii. General and Referential forms, *Sir and Madam*
- iii. Administrative term, e.g. *HOD* (Head of Department), *Dean*

Staff of the Faculty of Arts and Islamic Studies use academic titles to address one another. The use of *Doctor* or *Professor* indicates hierarchy. However, there is variation on how the terms are used among the staff. A staff of a department plays a vital role in the use of the terms. For example, the staff of the Department of English and Literary Studies used the *Professor* and *Doctor* titles more often to address one another irrespective of one's position and gender. The department staff used both Hausa and English in their conversation. This is demonstrated below:

1. Junior Staff: *Professor* ináa kwáanáa?  
'Good morning, Professor.'  
Professor: *Morning*.

The above was an exchange between a junior staff of the Department and a Professor in the morning when the staff went to the Professor's office. Another example is an encounter between a female staff and a Professor at the Head of Department's office when they were having an informal chat.

2. Professor: *Doctor* kìn gá dāa dúk dà múu ákèe yìn wánnàn àbìn, àmmáa yànzú bà mù sán ànàa yì báa.  
'Doctor, we were part of these activities in the past but we do not know what is happening now.'  
Junior Staff replied: *Ái án húutár dà kúu nèe, Prof.*  
'Well, you were relieved, Professor.'

Moreover, in an interaction between a staff with a PhD and a PhD candidate during a proposal defense, the non-PhD holder used the academic title as follows:

3. Student: *Doctor*, I will come and meet you in your office.  
Junior Staff: Okay.

The practice is also adopted by the staff of the Departments of Islamic Studies and Sharia where they mostly address one another with academic titles irrespective of one's status or age. But it is not common in the Departments of Nigerian Languages, Linguistics and Foreign Languages, Arabic, and History,

where a junior colleague uses the term to address his senior colleague, contrary the other two Departments, because of the maintenance of hierarchical structure in these departments. But senior members of the Faculty address themselves with *Professor*, unlike *Doctor*, where it is commonly used by both colleagues. For example, a non-PhD holder can address his colleague with *Doctor* or its short form, *Doc*, depending on intimacy and age. However, it is not common in the Faculty to address a senior PhD holder, who was a teacher to some of the junior colleagues, with *Doctor*. Instead, they use *Malam* or *Sir*. In most situations, he can only be addressed with Doctor title by his peer group who are Professors.

In addition, a combination of an academic title and first name, e.g. *Doctor Usman*, *Professor Aliyu*, or academic title and place name, e.g. *Doctor Giwa*, *Professor Azare*, or academic title and family name, e.g. *Doctor Almajir*, *Professor Makari* are frequently used by Faculty members, especially within a peer group or among those who are intimate with each other, or by a senior colleague when addressing a junior colleague irrespective of one's gender. In general, professors and doctors use the terms or their short forms *Doc* and *Prof* to address themselves in the Faculty, depending on the context, age, status, and degree of intimacy. These academic titles are degree more familiar and less deferential than *Sir* and *Madam*.

However, the data revealed that the majority of the senior colleagues in the Faculty do not bother to be addressed with titles *Professor* or *Doctor*. The case is different with newly promoted professors and the new PhD holders who value the titles and want to be addressed with them for recognition.

Consequently, the general and referential forms *Sir* and *Madam* are used by academic staff Faculty members. But the researcher observed some differences in the usage. For example, the staff of the Department of History used *Sir* to address members of the Department more than other Departments in the Faculty. This is presented below:

4. Junior Staff: *Sir*, Bārka dà yammáa.  
'Good afternoon, Sir.'  
Professor: *Doctor*, kánàa nán kùwáa?  
'It has been a long time, *Doctor*.'

This is a conversation between a professor and a doctor in the Department of History when they met at the departmental corridor. But female academic staff in the Department do not use the term frequently when compared with their male counterparts to address senior colleagues. Rather, they use *Professor*. This practice is not frequent in the other departments of the Faculty. In addition, female Professors are not frequently addressed with *Madam* by their junior

colleagues but *Professor* instead. In most cases *Madam* is applied to female professors by their colleagues, senior colleagues or those that are intimate with each other in the Faculty, as presented below:

5. Professor: *Madam* are you clear, *ko*?<sup>1</sup>  
Junior Staff: Yes.

The above was an encounter between a senior professor and a female *Doctor* during a Faculty meeting. The professor asked her whether she was cleared of what he had reported or explained at the meeting. Also below is an exchange between a male lecturer and a female lecturer when they met at the Faculty car park:

6. Professor: You are welcome, *Madam*.  
Junior Staff: Thank you, *Professor*.

The use of *Madam* also applies to female staff that are not from northern Nigeria, as exemplified below:

7. Professor: *Madam*, where have you been?  
Junior Staff: I'm around, *Sir*.

The above exchange is between a professor and a PhD holder at one of the Departments of the Faculty when they met in the afternoon. Also, *Madam* is used to address a female staff in the Faculty whose status is not known in terms of academic qualification, as demonstrated below:

8. Professor: Good afternoon, *Sir*.  
Junior Staff: You are welcome, *Madam*.

It was an interaction between a Professor and a female staff not well familiar to the Professor when she went to his office to make some enquiries.

However, the use of *Sir* marks a high degree of deference to Faculty and is thus chosen to enact the traditional student-teacher relationship. This corroborates with the findings of the power-oriented studies on address forms (e.g. Brown & Gilman 1960) and the recent studies on the use of address terms in an academic setting (Afful 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, Mwinlaaru 2012).

Therefore, the academic staff of the Faculty use administrative terms to address principal officers of the faculty, such as Dean, Deputy Dean, Sub-Dean and Heads of Departments to show their allegiance to the holders of the offices. This is shown in the data below:

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<sup>1</sup> *ko* [i.e. *kóó*] – a Hausa question marker.

9. Junior Staff: *Dean*, I think that we should contact C.I.T for clarification.

Professor: Okay, *Deputy Dean*. Are you available tomorrow? So that we can go round.

It was an interaction between a Head of Department during a Faculty meeting, where the HOD suggested that the Dean should contact the Director of the Centre for Information Technology for clarification with regard to the first semester results upload. The Dean sought for his deputy's consent to go and meet the C.I.T. director. In addition, the dean in most cases addressed the Faculty Heads of Department with HOD titles during an official meeting, as presented below:

10. Professor: *HOD* Nigerian Languages, do you have an update?

Junior Staff: Yes, *Sir*.

In addition, the data showed that most of the Heads of Department of the Faculty are addressed with *HOD* titles irrespective of gender. But in a situation where the *HOD* is a senior colleague, he is mostly addressed with the title by his peer group, and not by his junior colleagues who could be his students. Moreover, during an official engagement like Faculty or Departmental Board meetings, it was observed that the *Dean* or the *HOD* was either addressed as *Chairman* or *Sir* in most situations.

#### 4.1.2. Religion-related address forms

Religious orientation has left a special impact on the address terms in the university settings, particularly in northern Nigeria. One particular way of address is *Máalàm*. *Máalàm* (pl. *màalàmái*) is a Hausa term derived from the Arabic, *mu'allim* 'teacher', formerly used to designate a man versed in the Arabic language and Islamic Sciences to whatever extent. The tasks of a *máalàm* are many and various, and include any or all of the following: preparing talismans (Hausa: *háatimíi* from the Arabic *hātam*), dispensing medical cures, both herbal and Qur'ānic, advising on propitious days, slaughtering animals at circumcision, naming and other ceremonies, officiating at marriages, offering prayers on behalf of patrons etc. (Hunwick 2012).

The term *Máalàm* is highly respected among the Muslim Hausa. In fact, some professors want to be addressed with the term rather than *Professor* because in Hausa culture *Máalàm* is mightier than the professor. But later, even among the Hausa, the term has been used when addressing any gentle and responsible person as a form of politeness or title not only to those that are versed in Islamic knowledge (Chamo 2016). *Máalàm* is used in the Faculty to address both senior and junior colleagues. But as with other titles, there are some distinctions in its usage within the staff of the Faculty. Some Departments use the term more often

than others. For instance, staff of the Department of Nigerian Languages use the term to address senior colleagues and vice versa, because of the existence of high hierarchical structure. It is also non-gender bound because both males and females use the terms *máalàm* for a male teacher and *máalàmáa* for a female teacher. This is indicated below:

11. Junior Staff: *Máalàm*, *bàrkà dà zúwàa*.  
'You are welcome, teacher.'  
Professor: *Yáuwáa, Máalàm Núurà*.  
'Thank you, teacher Mr. Núurà.'
12. Professor: *Máalàmáa Hálímà táa shígóo kùwáa*?  
'Has teacher Hálímà come?'  
Junior Staff: *Áa'à Máalàm, bàrì à dúubà*.  
'Well teacher, let me find out.'
13. Professor: *Máalàmáa Bìntà, ìnàa kwáanáa*?  
'Good morning, teacher Bìntà.'  
Doctor: *Kwáanáa bíyú, Máalàmáa Bìntà*.  
'It has been quite a long time since we met last, teacher Bìntà.'

The examples 11-13 were sourced from the Department of Nigerian Languages. In example 11 a lecturer welcomed a professor in the morning when he came to the Department. He addressed him with *Máalàm* and the professor replied him with *Máalàm*, too. In example 12 a professor asked a female lecturer whether her colleague was around and addressed her as *Máalàmáa* to which she replied with *Máalàm*. The example 13 is an exchange between the female lecturers with PhD who used *Máalàmáa* instead of *Doctor* in the exchange.

The term was frequently used in the Faculty but it was more pronounced in the Department of Nigerian Languages and Arabic than in the other departments. It was mostly used in the Department of Nigerian Languages followed by Arabic, Linguistics and Foreign Languages, Islamic Studies and Sharia, History, and English and Literary Studies. Other religion-related titles like *Àlhájíi* (a male who performed pilgrimage at Mecca) and *Hájíyáa* (a female who performed pilgrimage at Mecca) are not commonly used among academic staff in the Faculty. However, the use of the term in the Faculty is determined by context, intimacy, distance and age. Even most of the Faculty academic staff, irrespective of their department, use the term to address or to show respect to someone. The more one uses the term the more polite he/she is. The use of such titles in an academic community may be attributed to the fact that some of the staff of the Faculty have a strong reverence for religion and tradition.

#### 4.2. Nicknames

A nickname is a familiar invented given name for a person or thing, used instead of the actual name of the person or the thing. According to De Klerk & Bosch (1997) nicknames are relatively impermanent, informal names. A nickname is coined for a bearer to serve a specific purpose and to signal the level of formality that a speaker and a hearer share. It is not meant to be permanent nor universally known, although in some cases nicknames end up being more well-known than real names. The speaker coined and used it to express a positive attitude towards the bearer. In addition, Gladkova (2002) pointed out that the usage of nicknames implied a positive emotional attitude towards the speaker. This positive emotional attitude can be expressed through the use of a nickname that shows affection or endearment (Crozier 2002). Because of their positive communicative intent, positive nicknames are usually used to reflect solidarity power relations between the speaker and the bearer. They are therefore used among people who know each other, such as close friends, relatives and even close colleagues (De Klerk & Bosch 1997). Their usage is indicative of a need to express warmth and affection towards the bearer and to supply a common ground for communicators or in some cases, to create a sense of belonging between the user and the bearer (Sobane 2009).

However, the staff of the Faculty of Arts and Islamic Studies use nicknames to address one another. But they use the positive one in order to show affection, endearment or a common ground between them. The common nicknames used in the Faculty are place names to address a staff. Faculty staff that have place or family names as part of their names are usually addressed with either place or family names. For example:

Jibril Hámman Yólà  
 Mùhámàd Hárúunà Hádéejè  
 Sàllm Sáamínù Mádàabó  
 Àadámú Ísá Báabùrá  
 Ìsmaáa'ílà Àbúubákàr Tsígà  
 Sáani Múusá Àyàagí  
 Ìbráahim Gárbà Sàtátíimà  
 Háafízù Míikó Yáakàasáí  
 Láwàn Dánláadi Yàlwá  
 Sà'íidù Mùhámàd Gùsáú  
 Ûsmàn Ûsáini Fággé

The above mentioned staff of the Faculty are mostly addressed with their last name, which indicates their place of residence, be it city, town, village or quarter.

It is observed that female academic staff are not usually addressed with place names instead of their names or titles. For example, Maryam Mansur *Yóolà* is not addressed with *Yóolà* or *Yóolà* plus a title, *Dr. Yóolà*. Female academic staff that have place names as part of their names are normally addressed with their first names or a title plus first name. Academic staff is also addressed with their family name being part of their name. For example, the following staff are usually addressed with their last names which are their family names:

Hàlìimà Àbdùlkáadir *Dángàmbó*

Mùhàmmàd Màikiyáari

Mùhàmmàd Áhmàd *Mákárí*

Tijjáani Shéehù *Àlmáajir*

Bàshir Mùhàmmàd *Sámbò*

Tijjáani Mùhàmmàd *Náaniyà*

The above staff are mostly addressed with their last name by their colleagues or senior colleagues in the Faculty. Junior colleagues do not usually address their senior colleagues with the term irrespective of gender, unless they combine it with either title or first name, e.g. Doctor Halima, Doctor *Àlmáajir*, Professor *Sámbò*, etc. It is noted that, like place names, family names alone are also not used in the Faculty to address a female staff, for example, Úmmùlkáir Àmiinù *Dántàatá*, to be addressed as *Dántàatá* or Hálìimà Àbdùlkáadir *Dángàmbó* to be addressed as *Dángàmbó* alone. However, the degree of intimacy between communicators plays a major role when choosing a term to address a person in the Faculty.

### 4.3. Kinship terms

The third linguistic feature the academic staff of the Faculty employ in addressing colleagues is kinship terms. Presumably, these terms are commonly used to mark biological relationships. So, their use by Faculty academic staff assumes intimacy between them.

The most common kinship terms used is *Bàabá*, which means *Father* for male staff. This address form is often used as a term of endearment, as the exchange below shows:

14. Junior Staff: *Bàabá*, zàn káawò áikiináa gòobée.

'I will bring my article tomorrow Dr.'

The above interaction took place between a senior staff and his junior colleague, who was his former student. He informed his senior colleague that he would submit his corrected article to him the next day. There is a staff in the Faculty whose name is *Bàabá* (he got the name from his family members as practiced in the Hausa society; according to this tradition, anyone that is named after his

grandfather is called *Bàabá*, in order to avoid mentioning the name of the head of the family). So, he was addressed by the Faculty members irrespective of age, gender, status or intimacy with the term, which is very common among the Faculty academic staff. But the usage in another context indicates relationship and intimacy, as shown below:

15. Junior Staff: *Bàabá*, káa mântáa bà kà rúfè mótàrká ááa.  
'Professor, you have forgotten to lock your car.'

The above example demonstrates an interaction between a daughter and her father, who are both staff of the Faculty. The daughter was informing the father that he forgot to lock his car. It is noted that kinship terms are not used to address female academic staff in the Faculty but are used by both males and females to address a male academic staff. In general, this is the least used term among the academic staff of the Faculty.

The research discovered that the staff of the Faculty use three forms of address to address one another in formal and non-formal interactions. These include titles (occupation- and religion-related titles), nicknames, and kinship terms. It is also discovered that there is variation with regard to the use of the terms among academic staff depending of their Departments. Staff of the Departments of English and Literary Studies and Islamic Studies and Sharia mark hierarchy in their usage of the terms, while History Department staff usage indicates power, as a teacher-student relation. Also staff of Nigerian Languages, Arabic, and Linguistics and Foreign Languages Departments normally use traditional address terms, as is commonly accepted in the Hausa society, instead of professional terms. In addition, the research reveals that title is the main address form used by Faculty members to address one another, in particular *Máalàm*, followed by nicknames and kinship terms. Deans and Heads of Department are addressed with their administrative terms by their age-mates and senior colleagues, while *Máalàm* and *Sir* are used to address them by their junior colleagues.

## 5. Conclusion

The findings of the research reveal that the use of address forms in the Faculty of Arts and Islamic Studies reflects the way address forms are used in the Hausa. In addition, address forms are culture specific and that dominant culture usually prevails in academic and non-academic settings. The research clearly shows the influence of Hausa culture on the use of address forms in the Faculty, particularly when it comes to politeness, respect and honor. Other tribes of the Faculty are influenced by the Hausa culture and they are integrated in the



dominant culture. The findings are in line with the results of the previous studies conducted in different settings in Africa and beyond, e.g. by Afful (2006a, 2006b, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c), Arua and Alimi (2009), Dornyo (2010), Mwinlaaru (2012).

The findings show that there is no much gender variation among the Faculty staff with respect to the use of the address terms. Social variables, such as gender, age, social status, degree of intimacy, and context of communication, determine the use of address forms among the academic staff of the Faculty of Arts and Islamic Studies at the Bayero University, Kano. Its academic society uses the titles in a non-conventional manner. The professional titles are not always used to mark the professional hierarchy, but rather to mark politeness or respect. Nicknames and kinship term are also used to stress the social relationships in both formal and non-formal contacts rather than other types of relations. On the other hand, the term *Máalàm* is a universal term which unifies the Hausa society.

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