**Religion and culture in Algeria: the impact of religious and cultural impact on social forms of address**

***Sarra Saadna***

PhD student

People’s Friendship University of Russia (RUDN)

Faculty of Philology, Moscow, Russia

E-mail: [1042225294@pfur.ru](mailto:1042225294@pfur.ru)

The use of address forms varies significantly across cultures revealing the individuals’ social, cultural and religious belongness. Drawing on Norrby and Wide’s research [2015], the use of different forms of address is “crucial for establishing and maintaining social relationships” because successful communication especially in intercultural contexts requires the appropriate form of address that determines the relationships between interlocutors.

In the context of Algeria, addressing practices represent the culture’s historical, social and religious backgrounds that shape means of interaction in social and individual contexts. for instance, Algerians may address each other using a variety of religious forms such as addressing old people as father and mother for the Islamic teachings to respect the old and count them as parents or the use of other terms that reflect the social status, power and solidarity between the interlocutors [Belfarhi 2020]. Therefore, the present study investigates how culturally embedded values and religious beliefs govern the Algerians’ choice of certain forms of address in particular contexts of communication.

Moreover, because these forms are intricately associated with fundamental socio-cultural norms, such as family ties, which are highly appreciated in a collectivist society such as Algeria, this paper explores the most frequent categories of address used in Algeria, identifying those expressions used in formal or informal settings. By utilising kinship terms, many Algerians can articulate not only a sense of closeness and solidarity but also an acknowledgement of respect for social roles and hierarchies.

The study employs a discourse completion task (DCT) methodology, which provides an effective means of collecting qualitative and quantitative data from 104 Algerian participants, representing different age groups and backgrounds. Through this approach, the research manages to capture the nuanced perspectives of both younger and older individuals, highlighting how generational differences may influence the choice of address forms.

The obtained data were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively, drawing on the face-saving approach to politeness [Brown & Levinson 1987] focusing on the ‘positive politeness’ and ‘negative politeness’ to determine whether the choice of a certain form of address is motivated by the addresser’s willingness to achieve greater closeness or greater distance with the addressee.

To determine the impact of the type of culture on the address terms, Hofstede’s [1991] cultural dimensions of Power Distance and Collectivism vs. Individualism were adopted for their usefulness to our study by determining the social organizations of the culture under study.

Moreover, Religious norms, age, and gender are also considered in our research because social status and roles in Algeria are determined according to these factors.

The quantitative analysis focused on the frequency of address forms used by Algerian respondents in each context, while the qualitative analysis revealed the participants' use of certain address form structures in each situation.

The analysis reveals that while kinship terms are prevalent, their usage is modulated by important contextual factors such as age, social power dynamics, and the perceived distance between interlocutors. The results reveal that Algerian addressers, old or young, employ a variety of categories displaced from kinship relations of brotherhood, mother, and fatherhood besides the religious and friendship domains to the social domain with unknown people. Among the categories used, kinship terms were the most used in all the situations, followed by titles and zero address forms. The choice between these forms was determined by age and other sociocultural factors such as social power, which is high in Algeria when the contact was performed from young to old, and religious norms that give elders a position of parents who must be respected and obeyed.

Therefore, the impact of cultural and religious values was observed on the participants’ choice of the kinship terms (e.g. baba/mama, Ami/Khalti/Tata, Hadj/hadja) “father/mother, uncle/aunt, the pilgrim (male/female)” when addressing elders to show respect. Other kinship terms (weldi/benti, khoya/okhti) “my son/my daughter, brother/sister” are used by the old to address the young or by the young to address other young addresses to show sympathy, solidarity, and closeness that reflect the addressers’ aim to lessen the face threats and save the Hearer's positive face as solidarity is associated with positive politeness [Scollon & Scollon 2001].

Moreover, to express distance because of the lack of acquaintance, Algerians used terms such as “Mohamed or Si+Mohamed, madame” (Mr. Mohamed, madam), which are derived from the Quran and French language.

Certain address systems are intended to show politeness and appropriateness in face-to-face interactions. These polite forms of address differentiate between those indicating negative politeness, which involves deference, titles, and respect, and those that express positive politeness, including closeness, intimacy, and familiarity.

The study provides new findings on the impact of culture and religion on Algerian Arabic forms of address and their functioning. It confirms Belfarhi’s [2020] arguments that kinship terms are Algerians' most adopted forms of address. It also supports Hofstede's [1991] findings that claim that in Arab cultures, group harmony wins over individual harmony as these cultures are characterised as collectivist cultures.

Overall, this study not only reveals the diversity of address forms in Algerian society but also illustrates how deeply intertwined these forms are with the collective identity and values of its people. By understanding the dynamics of address selection within this context, educators, linguists, and intercultural communicators can foster greater awareness and sensitivity to how language reflects and shapes social relations. The research serves as a valuable resource for those interested in exploring the intersections of language, culture, and identity within the rich and complex landscape of Algerian society. It encourages further investigation into how these dynamics can inform more effective and respectful communication practices in both local and global contexts.

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