إنشاء وإدامة العلاقات الاجتماعية باستخدام عبارات المخاطبة المألوفة: الوظائف ذات المنحى الشخصي للمخاطبة المباشرة

CONSTRUCTION & MAINTENANCE OF SOCIAL RELATIONS WITH FAMILIAR TERMS OF ADDRESS:

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المستخلص :

يسعى هذا المشروع الى الكشف عن أن عبارات المخاطبة المألوفة، والتي فضلا عن وظيفتها في استرعاء الانتباه /تحديد المخاطب، فلتلك العبارات وظائف أخرى تتمثل بشكل رئيسي بوظيفتها في البدء والحفاظ على العلاقات الشخصية/الوظيفة الاجتماعية بين المتحاورين. أن عبارات المخاطبة المألوفة، أو المخاطبة المباشرة، تضم الأسماء الأولى وعبارات التحبب ومما لها من صلة بالسياق والموقع الذي ترد فيه عبارات المخاطبة المألوفة. فقد يفضي سياق ما الى صدع في العلاقة الاجتماعية أو أن يتصف ذلك السياق بتعليق مؤقت في التوازن بين المتحاورين، وبالتالي فإن عبارات المخاطبة المألوفة ستستخدم بغية تلطيف وتهدئة هذا الاختلال في التوازن. يمكن لعبارات المخاطبة المألوفة أن تبتدأ العلاقات الاجتماعية وتديمها، ومما يعد مؤشرا الى وظائفها الشخصية الاجتماعية كما في توّقع حدوث مأزق في العلاقة، ووقوع تلك العبارات في موقع ذيلي في سياق اختتام أو إغلاق التبادل

الكلامي، كما وتعد الأسماء الأولى وعبارات التحبب مؤشرا الى نوع العلاقة بين المتحاورين أو أعادة التفاوض والتداول لعلاقة قائمة سلفا بين المتحاورين وعلى الأخص ممن تجمعهم علاقات حميمة أو صلة وثيقة، وظيفة المحافظة على التضامن والترابط، أن عبارات التخاطب المباشرة تعمل بمثابة استراتيجيات للكياسة والمداراة الإيجابية في السياقات الكلامية التي تنطوي على أفعال تهدد الوجه بغية تحقيق الإصلاح والاستدراك، أي أن الأسماء الأولى وعبارات التحبب هي بمثابة السلوك السياسي والحصيف والعبارات المخففة والملطّفة. مع هذا، فلا توجد علاقة متعادلة بين عبارات المخاطبة المباشرة ووظائفها، وحيث أنه بسبب كونها متعددة التكافؤ فيمكن للاسم الأول أو عبارة التحبب إظهار والتعبير عن الازدراء والإهانة عوضا عن أن تكون لها وظيفة في تحديد/استدعاء المخاطب أو حتى وظيفة تحبب وخاصة في المواقف التي تنطوي على مواجهة/مجابهة. فلا يساهم هذا البحث في الدراسات اللغوية وحسب، وإنما في تحليل المحادثة والتحليل اللغوي التداولي، التخاطب العلاقاتي، والدراسات الإعلامية (مثلا، الإفادة من المسلسلات التلفزيونية كمجموعة من النصوص المكتوبة لغرض التحليل).

الكلمات المفتاحية: العلاقات الاجتماعية، التوازن، التداخل،

Abstract:

This study endeavors to divulge that familiar terms of address, in addition to their attention/identifying function, have other functions, mainly initiating and maintaining interpersonal relationship between the interlocutors, i.e. a social function. Familiar terms of address, or direct address, comprise first names and terms of endearment. Relevant to this are the context and position in which familiar terms of address occur. A context may lead to a break in the social relation or is characterized by a temporary suspension of equilibrium between the interlocutors, thus, familiar terms of address are used in order to assuage this imbalance. Familiar terms of address can initiate and maintain social relations signaling an interpersonal functions such as anticipating a

relationship trouble, tag-positioned terms of address in closing sequences in interaction; first names and terms of endearment are also indicative of the kind of the relationship the interlocutors have or they (these terms) renegotiate an already existent relationship among the interlocutors particularly intimates; maintenance of solidarity and bonding; terms of direct address serve as positive politeness strategies in the contexts of face-threatening acts to accomplish redress, i.e. serving as politic behavior and mitigators. There is, however, no one-to-one relationship between the terms of direct address and their functions: due to their multivalence, a first name or an endearment term can display disrespect or offence in lieu of having an identification/summoning or even endearing function especially in confrontational situations. This paper not only contributes to the linguistic studies, but also to discourse and pragma-linguistic analysis, relational communication, and media studies (e.g. utilizing TV drama as a corpus for analysis.

Key words: *social relation, imbalance, Familiar, interlocutors, Construction & Maintenance of Social Relation.*

1 INTRODUCTION

I am quite interested in the Holy Quran and aside from Its massive tremendous eternal value as a Book of Allah, the Holy Quran is linguistically universal. Such statement might probably sound strictly irrelevant and subjective. My point is, however, to indicate the source of inspiration for this project. Like every Muslim, I often read/recite the Holy Quran and I am especially fascinated by the Surat "Taha." Further, I am even more interested and particularly fascinated by "Moses": He is being frequently and repeatedly mentioned in the Holy Quran. In the course of my reading/reciting the Surat "Taha," which I often do, the verses 92, 93, and 94 caught my attention in a remarkable way. While reading/reciting these verses especially, I have noticed that in

the interaction that took place between Moses and Aaron, the former commenced the verse/utterance with the use of his brother's first name, "Aaron," which did not have an identifying/summoning function, at least not as its primary function. In the next verse/utterance, another direct address is used by Aaron when responding/addressing his brother Moses, with a family or kinship term (Dunkling, 1990); (Leech, 1999): "My mother's son." Only these three verses render a linguist contemplate and raise the following simple question: "What's the significance of using a direct address (first names and endearments) in a particular context of situation?" and "Is there more to a name/an endearment term of address other than the attention/identifying function, or "summons/address," according to (Schegloff, 1968) terms?"

Addressing someone with a term of endearment seems an obvious indicator of an intimate relationship, which may account for the fact that there is so little research on how these forms are used in conversation. As (Sacks, 1987, p. 56) notes: "One commonly tends to avoid making "obvious" observations because it is not obvious what thereafter to be done with them." Sacks' work shows that what can be done with them is to reveal the organization of actions which underpin social life. In this section, my goal is to reveal how "mundane" terms of address function as interactional source for establishing and maintaining social relations. In this endeavor, I follow (McConnell-Ginet, 2003), who considers terms of address windows on the construction of social relations. Familiar terms of address are considered as a resource for establishing and maintaining social relations in sequences, in which a relationship is threatened or in need of re-negotiation. From a syntactic point of view, terms of address like "Kitty" or "sweetie" are resources at the phrase level. An initial survey of my data yielded that terms of endearment occur in the same conversational environments in which we find first name address and consequently seem to follow the same pattern. I therefore chose to investigate these two

forms of vocative noun phrases, subsuming them under the term familiar terms of address.

Aside from their attention/identifying function, I argue that terms of address (first names and endearments) have a relationship-construction-maintenance function, especially in contexts that may lead to a break in social relations, i.e. contexts that are characterized by a temporary suspension of equilibrium and the terms of address function to assuage it, thereby reaffirming the relationship at the macro-level of social organization.

Considering terms of address windows on the construction of social relations in communities, my goal is to reveal how mundane terms of address function as an interactional source for establishing social relations.

While a semantic categorization and description of sociolinguistic rules of address are good starting points for research on nominal terms of address, it stresses the full explanation of the patterns of direct address by relating their usage to the surrounding interaction and by looking how they work in their conversational local contexts.

Their function, position, or context, familiar terms of address always accomplish so sort of interpersonal/ social relationship.

Furthermore, a more dynamic perspective is to correlate the functions of nominal terms of address to their position in discourse.

2.1 Semantic description of familiar terms of address

Generally, scholars distinguish the following types of the semantic categorization of nominal terms of address (Dunkling, 1990); (Leech, 1999): endearments (e.g. "sweetie"), family or kinship terms (e.g. "dad"), familiarizers (e.g. "mate"), familiarized first names (e.g. "Kitty"), first names in full, title and surname, honorifics (e.g. "Sir"), invectives (e.g. "chucklehead"), and nonce or ad hoc names (e.g. "Ms. Know-it-all"). Similarly, (Braun, 1988, p. 253) differentiates four groups of meanings: (1) master, senior, superior; (2) companion, comrade; (3) friend, acquaintance; (4) relative.

Pioneering work on the rules of address in American English by Brown and Ford (1961) and (Ervin-Tripp, 1972) shows that intimates use endearments and first names.(1) Both studies are in keeping with (Brown & Gilman, 1960) research on the pronouns of power and solidarity, which uses the properties of the dyad of speaker and addressee as a key to the usage of terms of address.

The early descriptions of terms of address usage are limited to a correlation of choice of terms with the participants' relationship and leave out contextual factors such as key, goals and setting. If, for instance, your sister is a judge, you will neither address her by her first name in court nor will you address her by "your honor" at the dinner table, unless for humorous purposes.

1) For a cross-cultural treatment of rules of address see (Braun, 1988).

2.2 Functions of nominal direct address

(Zwicky, 1974) states that direct address serves at least two functions: firstly, calls, designed to catch the addressee's attention and secondly, addresses, which function to maintain or emphasize the contact between speaker and addressee. This distinction corresponds to (Schegloff, 1968), who uses the terms "summons" and "address" to describe these two patterns in conversational openings. Likewise, (Eirlys Davies, 1986)

distinguishes an identifying and an expressive function. More recent work by (Leech, 1999) on the basis of the spoken section of the Longman Spoken and Written English Corpus (LSWE) yields three pragmatic functions: 1) summoning attention, 2) addressee identification, 3) maintaining and reinforcing social relationships.

In his dictionary of epithets and terms of address, (Dunkling, 1990) lists as many as 30 reasons for the use of direct address, also taking into account ceremonial and ritual usage. These thirty reasons mirror the capacity of terms of address "to locate the speaker and discourse in a particular social world" (Zwicky, 1974, p. 795). According to Zwicky, they do so by expressing attitude, politeness, status, opinion about the degree of intimacy and the type of interaction, judgment about various properties of the addressee (sex, age, occupation, physical and personal characteristics, family relationship, marital status), and membership. He concludes that there is virtually no effectively neutral direct address.

2.2.1 Functions of nominal terms of address and their position

A more dynamic perspective is to correlate the functions of nominal terms of address to their positions in discourse. Syntactically, nominal direct address is free as opposed to pronominal address, which is mainly bound. For example, in the sentence "Kristy, could you hand me the book?" the noun phrase "Kristy" is free and could be moved to the end of the communicative unit, whereas the pronoun "you" also functioning as address form cannot be moved around. As the following examples show, nominal direct address can occur initially (1), medially (2), finally (3), or stand alone (4):

(1) sweetie I got to go.

(2) you must realize honey that we can't keep meeting like this. (Zwicky, 1974)

(3) you know what honey?

(4) Carrie.

McCarthy and O'Keeffe (2003) caution that the term "medial position" needs defining. They find that most medial direct address can in fact be considered turn-initial, since they are merely preceded by a discourse marker or other type of utterance preface, e.g. "Tell me, Margaret. Er you more or less did= got where you are today more or less off your own bat" (McCarthy & O'Keeffe, 2003, p. 166).

Few studies correlate position and function, and their findings are contradictory. For telephone openings (Schegloff, 1968) shows that addresses, i.e. addressee-identifying or relationship maintaining terms of address, occur at the beginning of an utterance, at the end of an utterance or between clauses or phrases within utterances. Summonses, i.e. attention-getting terms of address, on the other hand, are potentially free and are typically accompanied by recycling to the start of the utterance.

This pattern frequently occurs in classroom talk, when the teacher notices that some pupil is not paying attention in the middle of a syntactic unit, for example, "read the- Alice. read the text quietly."

(Leech, 1999) finds that the position of direct address is directly related to its pragmatic function: initial direct address tends to combine the attention-getting function with the function of signaling out the appropriate addressee and utterance-final address combines addressee-identifying and relationship-maintenance functions. (Lerner, 2003) research on address in sequence-initiating actions within multiparty conversations yields similar patterns. In his data, pre-positioned terms of address are employed as a device to establish or verify the availability of a recipient in situations where this may be problematic. Post-positioned terms of address, on the other hand, are used to demonstrate

a particular stance toward the relationship with a recipient in situations in which a confirmation of that stance is particularly relevant.

In essence, these two examples confirm (Leech, 1999) claim that direct address in initial position has predominantly an attention/identifying function whereas direct address in final position has predominantly an interpersonal function. As the LSWE corpus mostly yields direct address in utterance-final position, (Leech, 1999) concludes that the expressive/contact function of terms of address is prevalent. (McCarthy & O'Keeffe, 2003) take (Leech, 1999) description of terms of address as a starting point and present a more sophisticated picture by distinguishing several interpersonal and organizational functions and by looking at two sets of data: conversations between intimates (friends, family) from the Cambridge and Nottingham Corpus of Discourse in English (CANCODE) and radio phone-in calls.

While the first set of data compares to (Leech, 1999) in yielding a high total for direct address in final position and a high percentage of expressive/contact functions, the radio call-in corpus has a significantly higher amount of utterance-initial and medial direct address and the organizational functions of direct address prevail. A closer analysis of final position address in the CANCODE data also confirms (Leech, 1999) correlation of utterance-final position and social function: 62% of terms of address in this position functions in badinage, the mitigation of face-threats and other relational work. By contrast, the distribution of direct address in the radio data is characterized by a higher frequency of organizational functions (call management, turn management, topic management, summonses), accounting for the higher number of turn-initial direct address. A more detailed investigation of the functions of medial direct address in the radio corpus also yielded a higher percentage of organizational functions in this position. In sum, broad-brush corpus studies show that the uses of direct address vary with the type of speech event, but there seems to be a general tendency that utterance-final

address predominantly functions on the interpersonal plane while utterance-initial and medial address predominantly function on the organizational plane.

2.2.2 Specific Functions

1- (Wootton, 1981), focusing on child-parent interaction, shows that in this setting utterance-initial direct address also has important interpersonal functions. In his data, utterance-initial address is used to **anticipate trouble**, including relationship trouble. The following example fits this pattern. Turn-initial direct address clearly does not predominantly function to identify someone or to catch their attention.

2- (Jefferson, 1973) close analysis of **closing sequences**, for example, finds a special function of nominal direct address. She shows how tag-positioned address operates to add to the length of an ongoing utterance and provide that a speaker has not stopped talking, although a possible complete utterance has been produced. This usage prevents informative pauses, shifting the status of the term of address "from a key locus of relational work to a sound particle in the service of another type of interactional work" (Jefferson, 1973, p. 74).

3- As for extra-linguistic context, (Leech, 1999), for example, shows that direct address is not used among intimates where neither addressee-identifying nor relationship-maintenance is required. When participants are sure of their mutual relationship, for example in conversations between mothers and daughters, wives and husbands and good friends, terms of address are rare. Consequently, in these contexts, every familiar term of address which does not serve to identify an addressee can be considered marked and either indicates some kind of relationship renegotiation or has some other special function.

4- In a study of children's friendship groups, (Emihovich, 1981), for instance, shows that little children regularly use their names in their interactions, even when summoning attention and addressee-identification were clearly not an issue and

although the children were sure of their mutual relationship. She concludes that they use first names to maintain solidarity as a friendship cohort and to indicate their special relationship as "best buddies" vis-à-vis other children playing around them.

5- This in-group marking function is in keeping with (Brown & Levinson, 1987) claims that familiar terms of address like first names and endearments are a positive politeness strategy. They also state that familiar terms of address typically occur in the context of face-threatening acts to accomplish redress. Their latter claim is corroborated by (McCarthy & O'Keeffe, 2003) corpus data, which yield 15% of direct address in contexts of face-threats.

6- While (Brown & Levinson, 1987) state that a higher degree of imposition causes shifts towards more formal address than usual and never to more intimate forms, (Terkourafi, 2004) shows for her corpus of spontaneous conversational data from Cypriot Greek that such shifts towards more intimate forms do occur in the context of reprimands. She argues that the use of an endearment enhances the chance of the addressee's compliance with the remark; by affirming intimacy through the use of intimate address, the speaker frames the criticism as a piece of advice rather than a reprimand. According to (Terkourafi, 2004), it is the high degree of imposition which requires a reaffirmation of closeness through the use of more intimate terms of address. In (Watts, 2003) framework, terms of address can thus serve as politic behavior in the sense of appropriate to the situation as well as going beyond what is appropriate.

"The class of mitigators includes vocatives occurring in any context where there is a potential threat to positive to positive or negative face (Brown & Levinson, 1987); i.e. any challenge or adversative utterance, or any potentially sensitive or offending context, or any attempt to direct or coerce the recipient via imperatives or requests that

might restrict the recipient in terms of action or behavior. (McCarthy & O'Keeffe, 2003, p. 164).

2.3 DIRECT ADDRESS MULTI-VALENCE

(Tannen, 1993) cautions against a simple form-function equation in discourse analysis, showing that all linguistic strategies are relative.

As Antaki, Condor, and Levine state "there is no point in searching for the meaning of a word without taking into account its indexicality – the fact that it will always be used in some certain set of circumstances" (Antaki, Condor, & Levine, 1996, p. 489). A few studies have shown that this also holds for forms of direct address. Any linguistic item used as address can function as endearing as well as neutral or even deprecating. However, (Goodwin, 1990) shows how a semantically neutral term of address can display disrespect in a specific interactional context. Goodwin's data also contains terms of endearment used to display disrespect towards the interlocutor in confrontational situations:

Goodwin-1990: 150

Bea I'm just askin' you how you know.

Ruby and I'm just tellin' you honey.

Certainly, prosody plays an important role in signaling whether the term "honey" or a first name has an endearing, neutral, or deprecating function.**(2)**

(2) For the deprecating usage of "dear" see also (McConnell-Ginet, 2003).

CORPUS ANALYSIS FOR FAMILIAR TERMS OF ADDRESS:

THE HOLY SURAT OF "TAHA" & THE TV DRAMA "BROTHERS AND SISTERS"

Given the functional complexity of direct address, a categorization according to conversational contexts is more useful, allowing for an analysis that takes into account their versatility of functions, i.e. multivalence. Such analysis can go beyond indicating that direct address has interpersonal functions by revealing how it accomplishes these interpersonal/ social functions.

3.2 MOSES – AARON EXCHANGE: BLAME/APOLOGETIC CONTEXT

The following excerpt, which is quoted verses from the Holy Quran, Surat "TAHA," shows, again, the multivalence of the functions of familiar terms of address, a first name "Aaron" and a family or a kinship term "My Mother's Son/or The Son of my Mother's," the context and position in which they occur. As Aaron did not comply with what his brother, half brother on his father's side, Moses told to do; mainly that when the people went astray, Aaron did not go after Moses and report that massive incident to him. Hence, the context is problematic, confrontational, and has a break in the interpersonal social relation in this brother-brother interaction. This exchange specifically demonstrates how the use of terms of address in a certain position, mainly initial position, will potentially have an assuaging effect to this imbalance, a positive politeness strategy to save Aaron's face in this blame/reprimanding-implicative context, with the latter's apologetic turn.

قَالَ يَا هَارُونُ مَا مَنَعَكَ إِذْ رَأَيْتَهُمْ ضَلُّوا (٩٢) أَلَّا تَتَّبِعَنِ أَفَعَصَيْتَ أَمْرِي (٩٣) قَالَ يَبْنَؤُمَّ لَا تَأْخُذْ بِلِحْيَتِي وَلَا بِرَأْسِي إِنِّي خَشِيتُ أَنْ تَقُولَ فَرَّقْتَ بَيْنَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَلَمْ تَرْقُبْ قَوْلِي (٩٤)

In turn (1):

قَالَ يَا هَارُونُ مَا مَنَعَكَ إِذْ رَأَيْتَهُمْ ضَلُّوا (٩٢) أَلَّا تَتَّبِعَنِ أَفَعَصَيْتَ أَمْرِي (٩٣)

This turn is an example of an elaborate question with two interrogative moves, prefaced with a term of address: a first name, "Aaron." Moses' use of the verse/utterance-initial first name address: "Aaron" has a "blame-implicative address" (Spitz, 2005) and here clearly indicates that Moses is reproving Aaron for what he has done. The latter has made a mistake by not adhering to what Moses told him to do. Moreover, Moses' use of his brother's name anticipates trouble, including relationship trouble, thereby breaking the social relation and disturbing the desired equilibrium between the interlocutors, namely Moses and his brother Aaron (Wootton, 1981). This interpretation is confirmed by the following verse/turn (2):

قَالَ يَبْنَؤُمَّ لَا تَأْخُذْ بِلِحْيَتِي وَلَا بِرَأْسِي إِنِّي خَشِيتُ أَنْ تَقُولَ فَرَّقْتَ بَيْنَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَلَمْ تَرْقُبْ قَوْلِي (٩٤)

Aaron admits to his misdemeanor/mistake and justifies why he did this to begin with. Admission of guilt and justification, using an initial nominal term of address, a family or kinship term (my mother's son) which clearly indicates that the addresser and addressee are related, family members, and thus this can be framed as brother-brother interaction, but the frame is clearly argumentative. Despite the fact that Moses is Aaron's half brother on his father's side, Aaron uses the kinship term "mother" as it has a softening effect while Aaron gives an account for his behavior- a device of remedial work and as an explanation of Aaron's misdemeanor.

Apologies are an environment in which familiar terms of address can be found. Since apologies are one of the main devices of "remedial work" in (Goffman, 1971) sense, their occurrence signals that some social infringement has occurred. This concurs with (Brown & Levinson, 1987) categorization of apologies as threatening the speaker's (here Aaron's) positive face. In terms of the notion of equilibrium, apologies cause an

imbalance through lifting the desired equality between the interlocutors. The analysis shows that apologies are a context in which familiar terms of address, along with other linguistic patterns such as accounts, can be considered politic behavior, seeking to re-establish the equilibrium and to reaffirm the relationship between the interlocutors, who are brothers in this context. The interpersonal category of direct address, mitigators, subsumes all forms of direct address redressing face-threats:

The class of mitigators includes vocatives occurring in any context where there is a potential threat to positive or negative face (Brown & Levinson, 1987); i.e. any challenge or adversative utterance, or any potentially sensitive or offending context, or any attempt to direct or coerce the recipient via imperatives or requests that might restrict the recipient in terms of action or behaviour (McCarthy & O'Keeffe, 2003, p. 164).

(3)An analysis of apologies as speech acts in the sense of Austin (1962) and Searle (1976).

(4)This is an example of a rhetorical question, which "refers to information the speaker already knows" and "orients the hearer to the speaker's point of view." (Freed, 1994, p. 631). According to (Ilie, 1994), explicit answers are regularly supplied by the questioner himself "to reinforce the implications of the rhetorical question" (Ilie, 1994, p. 103).

3.3 SUCCESSFUL AT FAILURE

9 Sarah: It's not disappointment, mom, it's shame. I failed, completely. I'm just trying to work out how I live with it.

10 Nora: Oh, sweetheart. Sweetheart, I know what failure is, but it's hard as it is. I think you have to lean into those feelings. You haven't had much failure in your life, Sarah; it

takes practice to be good at it. It hurts like holy hell, but it's important, it's the door that will lead you to you future.

11 Sarah: I just did a lot to do that. It's not who I am. You see, I'm a failure at failure.

12 Nora: No, honey. I, I think you're being spectacularly successful at failure.

13 Sarah: (laughs and throws the towel at her mother and then the latter laughs as well) Oh, mom.

14 Nora: Oh, sweetheart. (Sarah and her mother hug) (cf. Figure 1)

I argue that direct address can occur in comfort and support sequences as such sequences are characterized by imbalances. Sarah in turn (9) describes her feelings to her mother, feelings of shame rather than disappointment. Sarah is ashamed of failing at running the family business. The medial address "mom" has an organizational function, it is considered an overt relationship statement, which also compares to what Goffman labels "tie-signs", defined as "all such evidence about relationships, that is, about ties between persons, whether involving objects, acts, expressions" (Goffman, 1971, p. 232), it can be considered equivalent to a delay device giving Sarah a short moment to consider how to react, and it can be considered a politic behavior redressing the negative face-threats (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 66). Sarah's turn 9 is also an example of self-disclosure and troubles talk, where revealing problems and weaknesses is face-threatening to speaker and addressee at the same time (Brown & Levinson, 1987). The change-of-state token "oh" (Heritage, 2002a) at the beginning of Nora's response in turn 10 shows that Nora has become aware of Sarah's difficult situation (which augments the extent of her misery). The term of endearment which follows, "sweetheart," signals solidarity and the softness of the "oh, sweetheart" indicates that Nora sees herself in the position of a caregiver, as Nora's providing social and emotional support is part and

parcel of family member, especially part of being a mother, Sarah's. Nora's moves are "attempts to create discursive solidarity" (Guendouzi, 2004, p. 1643).

Sarah continues to describe her feelings and arrives at an assessment of herself: "failure at failure," (turn 11). Sarah's dictum not only evokes a strong imagery of herself, it also creates humor through the unexpected combination of the terms "failure at failure." The humorous key facilitates the actual function of Sarah's utterance, namely to signal that she is in trouble, thereby the humor and Sarah's ironic remark about herself can predominantly redress the threat to Sarah's face.

In the following turn (12), Nora echoes Sarah's ironic remark "failure at failure" with a modified humorous or teasing remark with a hyperbolic contrast: "successful at failure," which is the same as Sarah's dictum, thereby Nora plays along entering a playful frame and signaling that Sarah needs not worry about her vulnerability in this situation and that it is not her fault even though she is the CEO of Ojai Foods; making light of Sarah's predicament.

I argue that familiar terms of address, particularly in this context an endearment "honey" can initiate conversational teasing and humor, which ultimately function in relationship engineering and hence familiar terms of address have a special status. First, conversational humor generally "allows participants to perform for their mutual entertainment with a consequent enhancement of rapport" (Norrick, 1993, p. 43), rendering humor one of the crucial verbal skills involved in the establishment and maintenance of interpersonal/social relations. Second, conversational humor functions to display closeness by joking about shared troubles and constraints in the interlocutors/intimates' lives (the Walkers family business being closed), and consequently functions as a co-operative coping strategy (Jenkins, 1985).

To conclude, surprisingly, this accords with (Gordon, 2003, p. 397) concept of "supportive alignments, … in which one participant ratifies and supports another's turn at talk and what he or she has to say… sending the metamessage * (Bateson, 1972) 'I support you, we agree'."

GENERAL CONCLUSION

I have investigated the use of familiar terms of address and as prior research on terms of address has not provided a unified functional analysis, I have drawn from various approaches and studies. There is general agreement that terms of address have relationship-maintenance function. Using first name address and endearments in contexts where there is a temporary suspension of some component of interpersonal relationships functions to assuage disequilibrium. Their second interpersonal category, mitigators, subsumes all forms of direct address redressing face-threats.

For familiar terms of address used in direct address, I have focused on the conversational contexts in which they accumulate. Familiar terms of address occur in contexts which are characterized by a temporary suspension of some interpersonal relationship and function to assuage this disequilibrium and establish interpersonal relationships. This renders terms of address a potent tool in the creation and maintenance of interpersonal relationships.

I have shown that the function of direct address neither depends on its position in an utterance nor on its semantic meaning. There is virtually no affectively neutral direct address; it always accomplishes some kind of interpersonal relationship. A change of focus to another context may also be rewarding; since direct address has crucial interpersonal functions, institutional contexts with complex power structures may yield interesting findings.

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