Reverse Addressing in Modern Persian

Mahbube Tavakol[1a], Hamid Allami[2b]

Abstract

Reverse addressing is an interesting realization of kinship terms in interactive, face to face communication. This descriptive study was proposed to examine the use of family address pronouns in Iran as a function of the classical sociological parameters of age, sex, and social distance. It investigated various aspects of reverse addressing as a vernacular phenomenon. Data were reported from the spontaneous productions of 7 Persian natives of varying ages and genders, using record examination. Representative examples were extracted from the corpus to provide a thick description of this underexplored phenomenon. The occurrence of the same phenomenon in vernacular variety of other languages is also reported throughout the study just to point out that, though not universal, this is not a unique feature of modern Persian. However, this is not a substantial report since it is such a broad topic that cannot be fully discussed within the scope of this study.

[1]MA, Email: mahboobehtavakol@yahoo.com (Corresponding Author)
  Tel: +98-939-3931727
[2]Assistant Professor, Email: hamid_allami@yahoo.com
[a] Science and Research Branch, Azad University, Yazd, Iran
[b] Yazd University, Iran

1. Introduction

Generally speaking, sociolinguistics, which could be conceived as the study of language and society and the possible relationships between them, has long intrigued researchers. Cultures vary in terms of communication strategies, the type of language, the functions of various speech acts, and all the other dimensions of interpersonal communication that are considered as appropriate in a given context. As Yule (1986) rightfully pointed out, the use of address terms, as universal features of human languages, is the interface between language and society.

In fact, it could be forcefully argued that the variety of address forms and the variety of their applications (even outside the context predicted by language standards and/or the literal scope of kin terminology) is established by the socio-cultural context of the society. Amongst the plethora of address forms, kinship terms, which are defined from the view point of Wardhaugh (1998) as the actual words that people use to describe a particular kin relationship, are of utmost importance. They are worth studying in each community and are likely to be different because different languages provide their speakers with a set of distinguishing expressive resources which are culturally meaningful. Wardhaugh (1998) has pointed out that a variety of factors control our choice of address terms. Manjulakshi (2004) also noted that the relationship which is perceived to exist between addressors and addressees guides the selection of address terms and the related modes of delivery.

Persian language has provided its speakers with a plethora of kinship terms and it is upon the speakers to employ the best option at disposal based on the related context. The literature on kinship terminology in Persian language is representative of a great culture, strong relationships, and solidarity of descent and marriage relatives in Iranian culture. There

is strong courtesy and at the same time solidarity between family members and relatives. People even use kinship terms for their non-kin relatives to maintain solidarity and respect. Aliakbari and Toni (2008) have presented different kinds of address terms in modern Persian including kinship terms, some of which have no equivalents in English. They have also pointed briefly to reverse addressing as an interesting characteristic of Persian speakers.

This paper aims at studying an interesting feature of Persian speakers in the use of kinship terms, which is referred to as reverse addressing. Reverse addressing is the possibility of addressing a recipient with the addressor's kinship term and try has been made to investigate almost all its aspects based on harvested and self-reported data. Since this feature is not a universal feature of all the natural languages, representative examples are used with the English equivalents to provide all the readers with an in-depth understanding of this phenomenon. Throughout the study, it is mentioned that Arabic language also has provided its speakers with this kind of addressing. It must be noted that with respect to the consanguinity/affinity distinction which is made in Persian kinship system, this vernacular phenomenon is explored only in the case of the consanguinity system of kin-terms. It should be further noted that, there are a total of 14 terms in the system of consanguinity which are related solely to family members, not descent or marriage bonds.

2. Theoretical Framework

As pointed out by Kramsch (1998), language is roughly the principal means by which people conduct their social lives and it is sophisticatedly bound up by culture. The use of address forms and more precisely kinship systems, to signal the interpersonal, transactional relationships, is the interface between language and society. In fact, how a particular person calls interlocutors who have kin

relationships with that person is fairly related to some readily ascertainable factors such as age, gender, solidarity, etc. Since the year dot, there has been an interest amongst the researchers to study the use of language in society from different but seemingly compatible perspectives. During the recent years, sociolinguists have taken the enthusiasm of examining the variety of kin/family terms and the dimension of their selection from different points of view. According to Wardhaugh (1998) describing a particular kin relationship is an interesting way by which people use language in their daily living. It is not surprising that due to the variety of kinship systems around the world, there is an intensive literature on kinship terminology.

Hudson (1996) forcefully propounds that some typical concepts such as 'father' and certain equivalence rules are the keys to understanding the complex system of kinship terminology. He proposed that a rather universal pattern of kinship terminology across languages revolves around the term 'father'. He contended that a comparison of the prototype meanings of kinship terminology across various languages will give the impression that apart from the lexical differences, there are little variations in the very general rules of kinship system which could be attributed to the difference in derivation rules. However, he does not deny the effects of these few variations on the social organization of societies. Brown (1965) has also proposed a universal pattern, but this time for kinship terms usage. To investigate the universal pattern in kinship terms usage across various languages as proposed by Brown (1965), Hijirida and Sohn (1983) compared American English, Korean, and Japanese. As a result, they proposed 8 'putative universals' regarding the use of address forms along the same line of power/status and solidarity/intimacy.

Kroger, Wood, and Kim (1984) also concluded that there is a cross-cultural consistency in address usage by Chinese, Greek, and Korean speakers in conformation with the 'universal' pattern alleged by Brown.

Al-Sahlany and Al-Husseini (2010) have conducted a contrastive study to investigate the nature of kinship terms according to various views in both English and Arabic. The study clearly states the need to distinguish between biological and social parenthood and introduces intriguing concepts such as pseudo-kin, which may also indicate a special status. They propose a classification of literal and metaphorical types of kin terminology in Arabic. They have attempted to shed light on different views that are related to kinship terms in different societies according to the linguistic and/or religious point of views.

In contrast to these 'universal' approaches to kinship terms usage and patterns of kinship terminology, Braun (1988) has opposed this universal view of kinship terminologies. Having dealt with terms of address in a considerable number of languages and cultures in her book regarding terms of address, she is skeptical of universals in either the pattern or usage of address terms. She believes that kinship terms usage is a language specific phenomenon and maintains that universals in the field of address may be very few and those which could be found will probably be of a rather trivial nature. One such universal rule is the observation that address is differentiated in every language. Universals of this kind are not very important, but address is so varied that, possibly, one may not find anything beyond the most basic type of correspondence in addressing across the natural languages.

According to Braun (1988), the phenomenon of address inversion is a particularly controversial arena of struggle in the theory of address which is difficult to explain logically or in any universal terms. In fact, there are certain perplexing facts which are still confounded regarding addressing and using

address forms across various languages. Address inversion is essentially the reciprocation of a major kinship term or a superior status term to intercultural communication studies. Finally, it is forcefully notified that in most of the languages involved in his studies, depending on the context, address inversion is used to express affection and maintain authority, especially in talking to children. For example, a speaker of Arabic or Georgian may address his sibling's children with a term for 'uncle,' regardless of the sex of the addressee. This practice, he says, is wide-spread geographically and genetically as it is found in Albanian, Arabic, Bengali, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Turkish, etc. Here we take a detour to note that this is partly similar to the phenomenon under investigation in this study. That is in Persian also one may address the children of his siblings with the kinship term for 'uncle'; however, it should be mentioned that this phenomenon is more widespread in Persian, and other kinship terms such as mother, father, and aunt are also frequently used in the same way. Phenomena of this kind have led Braun to state that almost anything is possible in address and that numerous studies, in their search for universal rules that follow the abstract, idealized, and simplistic dimensions of power and solidarity and of symmetry/asymmetry, have neglected complex sub-rules that are context- dependent and highly culture-bound.

Reverse addressing is well expressive of the courtesy and at the same time solidarity that exists amongst Iranians (a concept which in some other languages is at best very difficult to express) and could be directly attributed to the sociocultural context of the society. Aliakbari (2008) in his sociolinguistic study has provided a comprehensive classificatory list of address terms in modern Persian. He has also briefly attended to reverse addressing as an interesting feature of Persian speakers. Keshavarz (2001) has conducted a study on Iranian post-revolutionary address terms from a politically and religiously oriented point of

view. He has also investigated the role of context in the choice of address forms, in his seminal work.Bateni (1973) has also proposed a complete classificatory list of Persian kinship terms including the system of consanguinity and the system of affinity, the former being the focus of the present study. Notwithstanding the many studies on the use of address forms, unfortunately, to the researchers' best knowledge, there seems to be a paucity of intensive literature on this specific vernacular phenomenon in modern Persian.

To sum up, following Braun (1988), while we might recognize the universal tendency of kinship terms to reflect power and solidarity inside the family across cultures, we should not overlook language-specific and culture-particular principles governing the proper usage of address terms. Therefore, the general idea behind conducting a detailed analysis of family terms of address in modern Persian is to add to the literature and provide a less contaminated account of address rules and more precisely the use of family address terms across various languages and cultures.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

The present study was conducted on the spontaneous productions obtained from a family of five members (Minâ, æli, æhmad, âzin (mom), and Saeed (dad), along with 3 of their relatives including mom's close friend referred to as khâle, dad's brother addressed as æmu/uncle, and a friend of dad's also referred to as æmu, while not being a descent relative. All the participants were living in Yazd province, Iran at the time of data collection. The participants' use of family address terms were recorded during their daily spontaneous conversations in various contexts and transcribed. The kids' interactions with non-family members were recorded in their frequent visits. A male Arabic native speaker and a female Italian informant have also taken part in the present study by being interviewed

regarding the same phenomenon in vernacular varieties of Arabic and Italian. It must be noted that they were recorded while being interviewed. The following table represents the characteristics of the participants.

Table 1
Characteristics of the Participants

	Mom	Dad	Minâ	Æli	Æhmad	Æmir (dad's brother)	Mehdi (dad's friend)	Aunty (the researcher)	Arab native	Italian native
Gender	F	M	F	M	M	M	M	F	M	F
Age	37	42	12	9	7	31	40	26	52	23

* Male (M), Female (F)

3.2. Procedure

This descriptive study is an attempt to investigate all the aspects of reverse addressing as a vernacular phenomenon in modern Persian. Seven native speakers of varying ages and genders were recorded while conversing with each other in various contexts. Their spontaneous productions were recorded using a digital recorder during the researcher's one-week stay in their house, and transferred to the computer to be transcribed and investigated in details. The family members were all unaware of the presence of a voice recorder. A total of 37 records made the corpus of the study from which representative samples were meticulously extracted to explore and describe all the aspects of the phenomenon in advance. Some examples presented throughout the study are hypothetical and imaginary situations that were not included in the corpus but were required for the purpose of clarification. The participants were Persian native speakers and the corpus was collected using record examination and interview.

The participants' daily conversations were recorded and transcribed amongst which representative samples were extracted. The recorded samples are daily exchanges amongst members of the family which happen frequently along the day and their interactions with their relatives and close friends. The examples used throughout the study are representatives of the collected samples. Since the study is explorative in nature, participants were interviewed after hearing their recorded voices to explain in detail the reason of using specific address terms in different situations. Various aspects of reverse addressing were substantially explained using the extracted examples to clarify those points which were likely to be confusing for non-native speakers. Since this kind of addressing does not happen in English and it is not considered as a feature of standard Persian there was not enough information in this regard. The only references are the collected corpora and the subsequent interviews with the native speakers. The only moot point here is whether or not the collected samples from only 8 natives could be representative of the addressing behavior of a society. The answer to this question is that they were the members of a typical family living in Iran and their absolutely spontaneous and unconscious addressing behavior was recorded to provide the samples. They could be considered as the epitomes or tokens of others' addressing behavior. Besides, the researchers are also native Persian speakers who have spent a lifetime in Iran and their familiarity with such a daily phenomenon and its characteristics is axiomatic. Throughout the study, questions are asked and each section seeks to find the answer to the pertinent question. In this way, each section reveals one specific aspect of reverse addressing extracted from among the total records. Try has been made to provide the readers with clarification

and in-depth understanding of the concept. In one case, the interaction of a son and his mother (the researcher's father and grandmother) using a specific variety of old Persian is also used to extend the phenomenon to varieties other than Tehranian or Yazdian Persian. However, more samples are needed to generalize the issue to all the dialects of modern Persian.

4. Results

4.1. Is Reverse Addressing Used in Written or Spoken Form of Language?

An important aspect of reverse addressing is that it is only realized in spoken language productions; in other words, it can be considered as a feature of vernacular language which is frequently used in daily face to face conversations. It is worth mentioning that we often speak of reverse addressing as an interesting characteristic of Persian speakers (not writers). In fact, it only occurs while the members of the family are really conversing with each other. The following example is taken from a casual conversation between a mother and her son. We cannot find the example of such reverse addressing in a formal written language production unless it is written using this type of vernacular language inside the family or it is about reverse addressing itself! Here we take a detour to note that the address forms used in conversation are in *italics*.

Example 1: The mom and the older son conversing while nobody else is there (REC 3)

Mom: æli, *mâmân*, (boro) dæro baz kon.
    æli, *mom*, (go) open the door

æli: bâshe *mâmân*.
    ok *mom.*

This example is a clear demonstration of the context in which reverse addressing occurs frequently. It is taken from a daily conversation between a mother and a son in the house (nobody else is present there) while the mother

is addressing her son as mâmân (mom). Now, there might be some types of written productions such as novels and plays in which we could find instances of reverse addressing but the actual phenomenon happens during a real life conversation among family members.

4.2. Is Reverse Addressing Symmetric or Asymmetric?

A privileged feature of reverse addressing is that it is rule governed; in other words, it is controlled by the factors of age and family relationship (the relationship between addressor and addressee). Usually reverse addressing is used in the conversation by the one who is older and considered to have a higher position in terms of family or kin relationship (for example parents vs. children), so in most cases the addressor is older than the addressee and in a higher position in the family. In cases which the addressor is older than the addressee, reverse addressing is asymmetric i.e., it is not reciprocal. It means that, the one who is older can address the addressee by his/her own address term but not vice versa i.e., it is not possible for the younger one to use his/her address form for the older interlocutor. These examples clearly show the asymmetric use of address terms:

Example 2: The uncle (dad's brother) and the older son conversing by the door (REC 17)

æmoo: æli, *æmoo jân*, bâbât kojâ-st?
Uncle: æli, *dear uncle*, where is your dad?

æli: Hæminjâ-st *æmoo*, ælân miyâd
    Here he is, *uncle,* (he) comes now

Example 3: Hypothetical (only to show the asymmetry of the phenomenon based on age and power relations)

æli: Sælâm bærâdærzâdeh, khoobid?
    Hello *nephew,* how are you?

æmoo: sælâm, *bærâdarzâdeh*, mæmnoon.
Uncle: Hello, *nephew,* thanks.

Example 2 is a conversation between an uncle and his nephew by the door of the nephew's house. In this example the uncle uses reverse addressing to address his nephew as æmoo (uncle). In this example the uncle is older than the nephew so reverse addressing is permissible. On the other hand, in example 3 the nephew is trying to use reverse addressing in a hypothetical situation when he tries to address his uncle as bærâdærzâdeh (nephew), but since the nephew is younger than the uncle and they do not have the same position in terms of kin relationship, it is not permissible for the nephew to addresses his uncle as bærâdærzâdeh (nephew). Consequently, example3 is considered to be impossible and will never happen in daily conversation between speakers having different positions in a family. Here, it is worth mentioning that apart from reverse addressing it rarely happens that an uncle/aunt addresses his/her nephew as bærâdærzâdeh. They are usually addressed as dear uncle/aunt (reverse addressing); otherwise, they are called by the first names. Now consider example 4. It is the same as example 3, but in this case it is possible for the son to address his father as pesæræm (my son).

Example 4: Dad conversing with the younger son when back from work at the presence of others (REC 13)

æhmæd: sælâm pesæræm, chera dir omædi?!
     Hello *my son,* why are you late?!

Father: sælâm (while laughing), bebæxshid âghâ dige tekrâr nemishe!
     Hello, excuse me *Mr.,* it will be never repeated!

If we claim that example 4 is possible while 3 is not, there definitely must be a reason behind this claim. Sometimes a son may address his father as pesæræm (my boy) or a daughter may call her mother as doxtæræm but it is quite clear that this kind of reverse addressing is sarcastic and metaphorical. It does not happen frequently; in other words, it is not considered as natural in daily conversations.

In this case the boy is willing to play the role of a father for his own father, usually this gives children a feeling of joy and they think that they are old and powerful enough to be the father of a father. As it is clear from example 4, the father also replies sarcastically when he addresses his son as âghâ (a term of respect or honor which is frequently used by Iranians as a sign of respect, especially before the first name (FN)).

Example 2 and 3 show that age constraint is very important and when there is a difference in age, reverse addressing is asymmetric i.e., it is only possible for the one who is older and more authoritative in the conversation. Now, if we are dealing with two relatives of the same age and same position, as far as kin relationship concerns, things are different. Suppose that the conversation is between a brother and a sister of about the same age. Their position in the family is considered to be the same, so in this case reverse addressing can be symmetric i.e., possible for both sides of conversation. Example 5 clarifies this kind of reverse addressing and what is meant by symmetric.

Example 5: Minâ and æli (brother and sister) conversing in minâ's bedroom at the presence of the researcher (REC 21)

æli: Minâ, dâdâshi, kolâh ghermezæto midi beposhæm?
     Minâ, *brother,* do (you) give me your red cap?

Minâ: næ, âji khodæam lâzemesh dârâm
     No, *sister,* I need it myself.

As it is clear from the example, both brother (æli) and sister (Minâ) use reverse addressing in the conversation. It means that, the brother, æli, addresses his sister, Minâ, as dâdâshi (brother) and in return Minâ addresses her brother as âji (sister). The example clearly shows that reverse addressing is possible for the people of the same age but it is symmetric.

Three points are required to be noted regarding this example:

1- Examples like this (asymmetric reverse addressing) do not happen frequently in daily conversations. It most cases brothers address their sisters as âbji (sister) and vice versa unless they have an important request or they like to emphasize their solidarity.

2- It was mentioned that for a brother and sister, with the same position in the family (whether they are young or old), reverse addressing is not only possible but also symmetric i.e., reciprocal, but what about parents who are seemingly in the same position in terms of power? Our answer to this question is that it normally does not happen between parents when they are conversing. Simply put, it is symmetrically not possible for both sides of the conversation to use reverse addressing.

3- It must be mentioned that âji is a family term for addressing a sister but its standard form in conversation is âbji. In many dialects of Persian it is pronounced as âji even in Tehranian Persian, which is considered to be the standard dialect, it is sometimes pronounced as âji.

Figure 1 simply shows the kind of reverse addressing, that is, symmetric versus asymmetric, which happens between kin relatives. The one-way arrow (→) is used to indicate asymmetric reverse addressing while the two-way arrow (↔) is used to show symmetric reverse addressing.
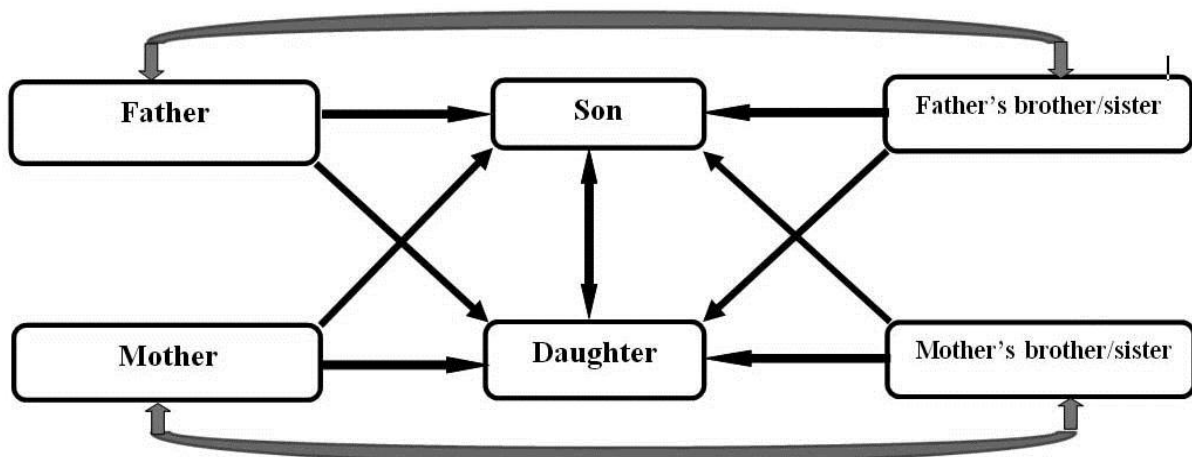

Figure 1
Reverse Addressing in terms of Reciprocity

4.3. What is the Purpose of Reverse Addressing in Conversation?

Refer to example 1 again. In this example the mother addresses her seven-year-old son as mom and in return the son also addresses her mother as mom. When the mother is asked about why and for what purpose she is addressing her son as mom she has no answer. In fact this kind of addressing is frequently repeated in daily conversations of family members and relatives in a way that nobody is even aware of it and they have no idea as why and under what circumstances they are using it. When they hear their own recorded conversation they are interested to know that they were addressing their daughter/son as dad/mom.

One possible explanation is that the addressor means to emphasize on his/her relation with addressee. So, if this is the reason for reverse addressing, in the example above, the mother unconsciously is emphasizing the mother-son

relationship, so we can interpret the sentence:*æli, mâmân boro dæro baz kon* as *æli, I am your mother, go open the door*. Now, if instead of mâmân (mom) the mother addresses her son as pesæræm (my son) in the utterance: *æli, pesæræm boro daro bæz kon*, again she is emphasizing the mother-son relationship but this time the utterance can be interpreted as *æli, you are my son, go and open the door*. Generally, there are several ways by which the mother can ask her son to open the door:

1- *æli jân*, mâmân (boro) dæro bâz kon
   dear æli, mommy, (go) open the door

2- *æli, pesæræm,* (boro) dæro bâz kon
   æli, my son, (go) open the door

3- *æli,* (boro) dæro bâz kon
   æli, (go) open the door

4- ∅(boro) dæro bâz kon
   ∅ (go) open the door

5- *bæche*, dæro bâz kon
   kid, open the door

In all, the utterances above carry the same request and are made by the same interlocutor, but in different ways. In fact, it must be mentioned that they are different with respect to the degree of solidarity they show between the interlocutors. The first example best shows the solidarity between the interlocutors. In this way, the mother is first showing her love and affection for her son and then asks him to do her a favor while emphasizing the mother-child relationship. When along the day children are frequently addressed as mom or dad by their parents, they unconsciously feel secure and make sure that their parents love them.

The second example shows exactly the same degree of solidarity and respect between the mother and her son. Again, the mother is emphasizing the mother-son relationship but this time there is no reverse addressing. In the third and fourth examples the mother is giving

order to the child, but this time with less solidarity than the previous examples. The final example shows the least degree of solidarity since the mother is addressing her son as bæche (kid). In fact, she is telling that you are a kid, but does not specify that she is the mother as in example 1, or he is her child like in example 2. Now, another example is mentioned below, but with a change in the way kinship terms are used.

Example 6: æhmæd, dad and two others in the car (REC 31)

æhmæd: *bâbâii…*
   Daddy…

Father: jânæm (my dear), *bâbâjân*
   Yes, *dear daddy*

æhmæd: vâsæm (for me)
   shokolât (chocolate) mixæri (buy)?
   Do you buy chocolate for me?

In this example we have two terms jân and jânæm. They may be considered to be different but they have the same functions in the conversation. Jân is a term which is usually used after names to show respect and love like æhmædjân (dear æhmæd) and jânæm (jân-e-mæn) literally means my dear, but sometimes the terms jân (dear) and jânæm (my dear) are used instead of 'yes' in the conversation. In this conversation between a son and his father, the son is addressing, say, calling his father and since the father knows that the son wants something, in the answer he says jânæm which means *yes my dear* and there is a reverse addressing after jânæm i.e., jânæm bâbâ jân, but this time since there is jân after bâbâ, the whole utterance jânæm, bâbâ jân is perceived as yes, dear daddy not my dear, dear daddy, so reverse addressing is applied, but this time followed by a term of intimacy, jân. While, using daddy for a son is itself a sign of solidarity, bâbâ jân is still more affectionate than using mere bâbâ i.e., without a term of intimacy.

Now, consider the following example which is different from the previous one in terms of the use of jân-e[2] (dear-e) before a kinship term, which means *yes* in the conversation.

Example7: All the family in the house, mina is going out with a friend taking mom's permission (REC12)

Minâ: *mâmân*
    Mommy

Mom: *jân-e mâmân*
    Dear-e mommy (yes, mommy's dear)

Mina: man daram miram biron
    I am going out

In this example, Minâ addresses her mother as mâmân and her mother instead of *yes*, replies her with the phrase: jân-e mâmân (dear-e mommy) but, it cannot be considered as reverse addressing since the whole phrase means, yes mommy's dear. As it was mentioned before, reverse addressing happens when the addressor uses his/her own address form to address the interlocutor, but in this example the mother is not using her address form for her daughter, but actually shows that she is affectionately waiting for her daughter's next utterance i.e., it is a case of positive answer to a request before the request is cited by the addressor which shows extreme solidarity.

Now what happens when the answer is *no* even before the request is cited by the addressor? Example 8 demonstrates a case when the mother is extremely angry with her daughter.

Example 8: Mom and Minâ in the kitchen, mom is washing the dishes while extremely mad at the kids (REC 14), this has happened also in RECs 9, 18, 32

Malihe: *Mâmân*
    mommy

Mom: *Mâmân*-o marg!

Mommy-and death! (do not call me again)

This is clearly not a case of reverse addressing but a way of giving negative answer to a non-cited request to show addressee's unwillingness to hear the addressor calling again. In fact, mâmân-o marg is perceived as: *drop dead before calling my name again* i.e., do not call me again.

Yet, another more interesting application of reverse addressing in daily conversations is when one of the family members aims at giving advice to the other member(s). This kind of reverse addressing does not happen frequently in daily conversation but when used, it aims at influencing the interlocutor to do or not to do something. In this kind of reverse addressing, the addressor clearly addresses the recipient in a way as someone else is addressing him/herself.

In the following example, the mother is clearly addressing her son as mâdær-e mæn (my mother) and when she is asked about her purpose in using this kind of reverse addressing, at first she is surprised because the speaker is not, for most of the times, even aware of her use of reverse addressing. Then after she is made aware of her addressing her son as my mother, she claims that she aims at ordering her naughty son to study for his exam but at the same time maintaining solidarity with her son and making him understand that she is worried about his exam. She adds that, she doesn't want her son to think that he is receiving an order, but instead takes it as a sympathetic piece of advice.

Example 9: Mom and æli when æli is going around the house teasing his siblings (REC 23)

Mom: *æli jân*, *mâdær-e mæn*, chera dærsâto nemikhooni? Mæge emtehân nædâri?!
    Dear æli, *my mother*, why don't you study? Don't you have an exam?!

æli: Hænooz do rooz vaght daram bekhoonæm, *maman*.

(I) still have two more days to study, *mommy*.

This kind of reverse addressing is also used by brothers and sisters (bærâdær-e mæn/xâhær-e mæn) when talking to each other and one is giving advice to the other. But it must be mentioned that the rule of asymmetric and symmetric addressing is also applied to this type of reverse addressing. As clear from the example above, it is possible for a mother to address her son as mâdær-e mæn (my mother), but not for a son to address her mother as pesær-e mæn (my boy); instead, in some occasions the son may address her mother as mædær-e mân (my mother). In the case of brothers and sisters it is possible for both of them to try reverse addressing i.e., it is symmetric, because they have the same position in the family.

An interesting point regarding this kind of addressing is that, if the parents are addressed in daily conversation as mâmân or mâmâni (mommy)/ bâbâ or bâbâii (daddy), in this kind of reverse addressing they usually address their children as mâdær-e mæn (my mother) not mâmân-e mæn (my mommy) and pedær-e mæn (my father) not bâbâii-e mæn (my daddy).

4.4. Is Reverse Addressing Possible for an Absent Interlocutor (Third Person)?

The answer to this question is simply *no*; in other words, we cannot find a case of reverse addressing applied for an absent interlocutor. Suppose that a father is asking about his son who is coming back from school; in this case, there is no way to address the son as daddy, since it does not make sense to the interlocutor. The only way in which the father could possibly use his address term when addressing the absent son is to address him as pesær-e bâbâ (son-e daddy) or æli-e bâbâ (FN-e-daddy) which cannot be considered as reverse addressing. This confirms the fact that reverse addressing is a feature of interactive, face to face communication.

4.5. Is Reverse Addressing Possible Using All Kinds of Address Terms?

Reverse addressing happens only with family terms like mâmân (mommy), bâbâ (daddy), etc. and relative terms like dâii (maternal uncle), æmoo (paternal uncle), khâle (maternal aunt), æmme (paternal aunt), etc. Read the following example:

Example 10: The researcher addressing her niece in a very normal occasion (REC 1, 5)

The researcher (khâle): *Minâ, khâle,* bia inja
   Minâ, auntie, come here

Minâ: omædæm khâle
   coming *auntie*

In this example, the researcher (aunty) is addressing her niece with her own address term. So, reverse addressing is done with family as well as relative terms. Khâle is one of the most used kinship terms since children address almost all the kin and non-kin females such as their mothers' friends as khâle (maternal aunt) rather than æmme (paternal aunt) and the same thing is true with æmoo (paternal uncle). Here, it must be mentioned that since in Persian language, kinship terms are sometimes used with non-relative addressees, reverse addressing also happens in the conversation between non-relatives i.e., a boy and his father's friend who is referred to as æmoo (uncle). Even sometimes, it is used by strangers in a public place i.e., a woman addresses a child whom she is visiting for the first time (and maybe the last time!) in a sub-way as khâle (auntie). So, it must be emphasized that reverse addressing is almost possible with kinship terms and not all kinds of address terms, and also it is possible with non-relatives when they are addressed with a kinship term.

Below is an example which shows an exotic use of the address form, but it should not be taken the same as reverse addressing.

Example 11: Hypothetical conversation between two sisters (based on the previously observed behavior of natives)

Mina: *Sæhær*, mæn hænooz mikhâm bâzi konæm
Sæhær, I still want to play

Sahar: *bâbâ (dad)* begir bekhâb (sleep).
khaste nashodi enghad bâzi kærdi?!
sleep *dad.* Aren't you tired of this much playing?!

This is an interesting example. In this case there is no reverse addressing since the conversation is between two sisters, not a father and her daughter. The younger sister is willing to play more and does not want to sleep; yet, the older sister who is tired and wants to sleep complains in return by saying: bâbâ, begir bekhab…! (dad, sleep…!). So, as it is obvious bâbâ (dad) is not used here as an address term but it is perceived as a kind of complaint; also, we must remember that Mina is addressed by her sister not her dad.

The phrases: Ey bâbâ! And Ey âghâ is also used to show complaint and/or regret. The reason why people use bâbâ and not mâmân in such situations when they are complaining to someone or want to force him/her to do something is that in the Iranian culture father has always been considered as the authority whose order cannot be disobeyed by children, so it has a kind of impression on the interlocutor as to do what is said and this can be a possible reason for using the term bâbâ or âghâ.

4.6. Is Reverse Addressing Possible with More than One Interlocutor?

Another important feature of reverse addressing is that it is possible to use one address term for more than one interlocutor. To clarify this aspect of reverse addressing, we have provided a good example here:

Example 12: Dad and his two sons in a normal occasion after lunch (REC 15)

Dad: *æli, æhmæd, bâbâii* beyâyn injâ kâretoon dârâm!
æli, æhmæd, daddy come here I have a word with you!

æli & æhmad: omædim *bâbâ.*
(we are)coming *dad.*

This conversation is between a dad and his two sons. As you can see, the father uses a single address term bâbâii (daddy) to addresses both of them and in return they address their father as bâbâ. So, it is obvious that reverse addressing is possible with more than one interlocutor i.e., you can address two or more interlocutors with a singular address term. Even without the citation of their names, both recipients (æli & æhmæd) knew that they were addressed by their father. This can happen in other cases as well, such as when *a khâle* (an aunt) addresses some children with khâle (aunt) not khâle-hæ (aunts).

4.7. Is Reverse Addressing Limited to Specific Varieties of Persian?

It could be forcefully argued that this phenomenon is not limited to the standard variety or specific dialects of Persian. It is employed even by speakers of varieties which are not mutually understandable by other speakers such as the variety spoken in Nain (Nā'īn), a city in the capital of Nain County, Isfahan Province. In addition to the standard Persian, most of the locals talk in an ancient Pahlavi Sasani dialect very similar to the dialect that is spoken by the Zoroastrians, which is taken from the central Iranian languages. The excerpt below is extracted from a conversation between a mother and her 52 year old son!

Example 12: A conversation between the researcher's father and grandmother who speak an old dialect of Persian (no REC)

Son: Mâmâ mu dârieshi

Mummy, I am going

Mother: Kiâeshi, mâmâ, iurhanig
Where are you going, mummy, come sit

Although, only by resorting to the above example we are not in a position to claim that this phenomenon occurs in all the dialects of Persian but at least we can claim that it is not only limited to a specific variety.

4.8. Is Reverse Addressing Specific to Persian Language?

Finally, it must be mentioned that this kind of reverse addressing is not specific to Persian language. In other words, though it does not exist in English, it is possible in some other languages. Arabic language is also a language which has provided its speakers with the possibility of reveres addressing to show their solidarity to interlocutors. Example 12 clearly shows the application of reverse addressing in a daily conversation between two Arabs.

Example 13: Hypothetical (taken from an interview with a native Arab)

ælæb (Father): Tæâli *yâ Bâbâ*
come here *daddy*

ʔælbent (daughter): hæsænæn
well

This example is a conversation between a father and his daughter. The reverse addressing used in this conversation is exactly like the one in example 1. In both, the parents, who are older and more powerful in the family, use reverse addressing non-reciprocally. Of course, it must be mentioned that in some Arab societies, children respectfully address parents' friends as 'uncle' or 'aunt'. Finally, it must be noted that reverse addressing as a vernacular phenomenon, is used in some romance languages such as Italian by virtue of interviewing a native. So, it might be frequently heard from dads when addressing their baby daughters something like this: 'venire qui papà'. Here it should be

notified that, there was not a specific purpose behind bringing examples from Arabic and Italian (they were available at the time of data collection). The examples do not prove the occurrence of the phenomenon in these languages, but provide a basis for researchers to take the enthusiasm of conducting some painstaking investigations about reverse addressing in other languages.

5. Concluding Remarks

As mentioned earlier, address terms including kinship terms are representative of the expressive resources and culture of a community, and in this regard worth studying (Aliakbari & Toni, 2008). This paper aimed at investigating various aspects of reverse addressing as an interesting realization of kinship terms in interactive conversations. Throughout the study, it was found that reverse addressing is a feature of vernacular language used in spoken productions and depending on the age and position of the people, who are engaged in the conversation, in the family, it could be asymmetric and/or symmetric. It must be mentioned that, there are different purposes in reverse addressing, the most important of which is maintaining solidarity and showing love and affection to the addressees. It was also noted that, we can use reverse addressing for more than one interlocutor, but it is not possible for an absent addressee, since it is a feature of face to face communication. Finally, it was revealed that, while absent in English, it is not specific to Persian language and the evidence to this claim is example 12 regarding the possible use of reverse addressing in other languages. Here it is pertinent to mention that, according to the results reported by several studies, address forms specifically the family terms of address, are reported not to share a universal pattern of use that is, following the commentaries by scholars in the field, while we recognize the universal tendency of address terms to reflect power and solidarity across cultures, we should not overlook language-specific and

culture-particular principles governing the proper usage of address terms. Therefore, the results of this study in conjunction with the results of several on-going studies in the field could provide the researchers in the field with conclusive body of evidence and shed light on the cross-cultural differences in the proper use of address forms. All which was proposed here could open the door to the sociolinguists to investigate such vernacular phenomena not only in Persian but in other languages to provide essential new insights.

Overall, this descriptive study aimed at providing a rather detailed explanation on reverse addressing by Persian speakers. Several questions were asked as when, how, and why speakers use reverse addressing and detailed answers were provided for each question throughout the study. The answers were accompanied by representative examples which were taken from daily conversations between descent and marriage relatives of both male and female. However, it must be mentioned that the study suffers from several limitations. The first point to be clarified is that all the data used in the study are limited to productions of only one family living in Iran and therefore not generalizable to the whole Iranian context. There were also problems with representing the segmental and supra-segmental (intonation and rhythm) record of the words spoken, but it has been tried to provide the non-Persian readers with comprehensible transcriptions. Since not many studies are conducted in this regard, there was a lack of references. The study is narrow and specific to Persian speakers. It is also pertinent to mention that concerning the dichotomy of consanguinity/affinity of Persian kinship terms, this vernacular rule applies solely to the consanguinity kin-system and not the affinity one. Finally, it must be noted that because of the lack of access to other languages' speakers, there is not much evidence as whether other speakers use this feature in their conversations and the study is limited to examples from Arabic and Italian languages,

which were generalizable neither to all the varieties of these languages nor to other languages.

References

Aliakbari, M., & Toni, A. (2008). The realization of address terms in Modern Persian in Iran: A sociolinguistic study. *Linguistik Online, 35*(3), 4-17.

Asdjodi, M. (2001).A comparison between Ta'arof in Persian and Limao in Chinese. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 23(4), 71-92.

Bateni, M. (1973). Kinship terms in Persian. *Anthropological Linguistics, 15*(7), 324-327.

Bates, E., & Benigni, L. (1975). Rules of address in Italy: A sociological survey. *Language in Society, 4*(3), 271-288.

Belz, J. A., & Kinginger, C. (2003). Discourse options and the development of pragmatic competence by classroom learners of German: The case of address forms. *Language Learning, 53*(4), 591-647.

Bloch, M. (1971).The moral and tactical meaning of kinship terms. *Man, 6*(1), 79-87.

Braun, F. (1988). *Terms of address: Problems of patterns and usage in various languages and cultures*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Brown, G., & Yule, G. (1983). *Discourse analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brown, R., & Ford, M. (1961). Address in American English. *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 62*(2), 375-385.

Brown, R., & Gilman, A. (1960). *The pronouns of power and solidarity*. Cambridge: MIT press.

Carter, A. T. (1984). The acquisition of social deixis: Children's usages of 'kin' terms in Maharashtra, India. *Journal of Child Language, 11*(1), 179-201.

Clark, B. D., & Costello, V. (1973). The urban system and social patterns in Iranian

cities. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 23(3), 99-128.

Danziger, K. (1957). The child's understanding of kinship terms: A study in the development of relational concepts. *The Journal of Genetic Psychology, 91*(2), 213-232.

Dickey, E. (1997). Forms of address and terms of reference. *Journal of Linguistics*, 33(2), 255-274.

Eslami, Z. R., & Noora, A. (2008).Perceived pragmatic transferability of L1 request strategies by Persian learners of English. In M. Pütz, & J. Neff-van Aertselaer (Eds.), *Developing contrastive pragmatics. interlanguage and cross-cultural perspectives* (pp. 301-334). Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Faerch, C., & Kasper, G. (1989). Internal and external modification in interlanguage request realization. In S. Blum-Kulka, J. House,& G. Kasper (Eds.), *Cross-cultural pragmatics* (pp. 221-247). Norwood, N.J.: Ablex.

Fakhr-Rohani, M.R. (2005). Persian religious honorifics: A preliminary pragmatic inquiry into the linguistic manifestations of two Islamic articles of faith. *Contact des Langues dans l'Espace Arabo-Turco-Persan*, 11(1), 37-43.

Farghal, M., & Shakir, A. (1994). Kin terms and titles of address as relational social honorifics in Jordanian Arabic. *Anthropological Linguistics*, 31(4), 240-253.

Ferguson, C. A. (1957). Word stress in Persian. *Language, 33*(2), 123-135.

Guemple, D. L. (1965). Saunik: Name sharing as a factor governing Eskimo kinship terms. *Ethnology, 4*(3), 323-335.

Holmes, J. (2008). *An introduction to sociolinguistics*. London: Allyn & Bacon.

Hwang, S. J. J. (1991). Terms of address in Korean and American cultures. *Intercultural Communication Studies, 1*(2), 117-136.

Jorgenson, J. (1994). Situated address and the social construction of "in-law"

relationships. *Southern Journal of Communication, 59*(3), 196-204.

Keshavarz, M. H. (2001). The role of social context, intimacy, and distance in the choice of forms of address. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 17(2), 5-18.

Kramer, C. (1975). Sex-related differences in address systems. *Anthropological Linguistics, 17*(5), 198-210.

Kroger, R. O., Wood, L. A., & Kim, U. (1984). Are the rules of address universal? III: Comparison of Chinese, Greek, and Korean usage. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 15*(3), 273-284.

Lambert, W. E. (1967). The use of *tu* and *vous* as forms of address in French Canada: A pilot study. *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior, 6*(4), 614-617.

Lotfollahi, B., & Dabbaghi, A. (2012). Translation of terms of address from English into Persian: Strategies in focus. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 21(3), 329-341.

Massone, M. I., & Johnson, R. E. (1991). Kinship terms in argentine sign language. *Sign Language Studies, 73(1)*, 347-360.

Morgan, L. H. (1870). *Systems of consanguinity and affinity of the human family*. Washington: Bison Books.

Mowlaei, A., & Faez, K. (2003). *Recognition of isolated handwritten Persian/Arabic characters and numerals using support vector machines*. Paper presented at the Neural Networks for Signal Processing, 2003. NNSP'03. 2003 IEEE 13th Workshop.

Nanbakhsh, G. (2011). Persian address pronouns and politeness in interaction. *Linguistik Online, 11*(5), 31-47.

Nevala, M. (2004). *Address in early English correspondence: Its forms and socio-pragmatic functions*. Mémoires de la Société Néophilologique de Helsinki, Helsinki: Société Néophilologique.

Perry, J. R. (2000). Epistemic verb forms in Persian of Iran, Afghanistan and Tajikistan. *Empirical Approaches to Language Typology*, *23*(5), 229-258.

Romney, A. K., & d'Andrade, R. G. (1964). Cognitive aspects of English kin terms. *American Anthropologist, 66*(3), 146-170.

Salmani-Nodoushan, M. A. (2007). Greeting forms in English and Persian: A socio-pragmatic perspective. *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences, 4*(3), 355-2007.

Scheffler, H. W. (1972). Systems of kin classification: A structural typology. *Kinship Systems in the Morgan Centennial Year*, *17*(2), 113-133.

Schleicher, A. F. (1997). Using greetings to teach cultural understanding. *The Modern Language Journal, 81*(3), 334-343.

Schneider, D. M. (1972). What is kinship all about. *Kinship Studies in the Morgan Centennial Year*, *21*(3), 32-63.

Solé, Y. R. (1978). Sociocultural determinants of symmetrical and asymmetrical address forms in Spanish. *Hispania, 61*(4), 940-949.

Spooner, B. (1966). Iranian kinship and marriage. *Iran, 4*, 51-59.

Strauss, C. L. (1943). The social use of kinship terms among Brazilian Indians. *American Anthropologist, 45*(3), 398-409.

Wardhaugh, R. (1987). *Languages in competition: Dominance, diversity, and decline*. Oxford: B. Blackwell.

Wood, L. A., & Kroger, R. O. (1991). Politeness and forms of address. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology, 10*(3), 145-168.

Wu, Y. (1990). The usages of kinship address forms amongst non-kin in mandarin Chinese: The extension of family solidarity. *Australian Journal of Linguistics, 10*(1), 61-88.