

Deference and subordination: Gender roles and other variables in addressing and referring to husbands by Yoruba women*

L. Oladipo Salami (Ile-Ife)

Abstract

The Yoruba society, like many patriarchal traditions, tends to espouse male supremacy - an ideology that is reflected, often, in many of the cultural values and beliefs of the people. The use of address terms in Yoruba constitutes an aspect of linguistic practices where there is inequality in the use of language between male and male, female and female as well as between male and female. The study reported in this paper focuses on the use of first names (FN), teknonyms (TKM) and pet names (PN) as address forms by Yoruba-speaking women in the city of Ile-Ife in interaction with their husbands. It describes the pattern of use according to a number of social factors including age, level of educational attainment, region of origin and speech context. The paper demonstrates that while these factors are important determinants of address usage by Yoruba women, gender role-expectation (child-rearing) and the relations of power between Yoruba women and men interact in some crucial way in the women's language behaviour. This is particularly so because of the social changes that have been taking place within the Yoruba culture over the last three decades or so.

1 Introduction

Sociolinguistic and anthropological studies have demonstrated that linguistic practices often reflect the thoughts, values and attitudes that speakers wish or wish not to express and that a society's beliefs about and towards sex differences can be reflected in the way (s) language is used to speak about men and women. It is observed that addressing people by name or by one second person pronoun or the other (where there are two types) tends, very often, to demonstrate the kind of relationship existing between a speaker and his/her listener. Also, as noted by Kielkiewicz-Janowiak (2000: 185), address forms are an essential part of most interaction-oriented utterances. Using power pronoun semantics as outlined by Brown and Gilman, Fasold (1990: 4 - 5), notes that these relationships are given, in terms of address usage, as usually of the following characteristics:

* This is a revised version of a paper presented at The Nigerian Millennium Sociolinguistics Conference, University of Lagos, August 16 - 18, 2001. I like to acknowledge the insightful comments of anonymous reviewers of LinguistikOnline on an earlier version of this paper. However, they do not bear negative responsibility for this version.

- (1) that in which one member of the dyad has power over the other. In this type of relationship, the interactants are not equal in status;
- (2) that in which the interactants are power equals;
- (3) that in which the interactants are power equals but have no solidary relationship (through shared values, for example). Here, the interactants are not familiar and have no intimate relationship; and
- (4) that in which interactants are power equals and have solidary relationship. Here, interactants are not only equal in power but they are also intimate.

(see also Brown and Gilman, 1960, Brown and Ford, 1964, Ervin Trip, 1972, Fasold, 1990, Mukama, 1995 and others).

According to Fasold (*ibid.*: 2), there are, generally, two main kinds of address forms: name usage and second-person pronoun, and that in principle people can be addressed in either of two ways. These are (i) using the first name or (ii) using their title and last name. He observes, however, that in a lot of cases one could scarcely use one or other form. In other words, there are two common options: the first is the use of a first name (FN) and the second is the use of a title with last name (TLN). Fang and Heng (1983) also points out other possible options which include the use of nick-name (NN), pet name (PN), 'milk name' (MN) and so on. The patterns of usage of these forms of address are such that there could be a reciprocal exchange of FN or TLN and a non-reciprocal usage of either term in which one person gives FN and gets TLN. These patterns of usage, though variable, are systematic and are governed by such social factors as the age, sex and status of members of an interacting dyad.

In standard Yoruba and the dialects of the Northwest and Central regions of Yoruba-speaking South-western Nigeria, the use of a particular form of address rather than another is also influenced, largely, by the social relationship existing between a speaker and his/her listener (see Soyoye, 1984 and Akindele, 1991). Although Akindele focuses specifically on the use of teknonym (TKM) by Yoruba speakers generally, he demonstrates that the context of conversation also influences the choice of this address form. The present study focuses on the usage of first names (FN), teknonyms (TKM) and pet names (PN) as address forms by Yoruba-speaking women in addressing and referring to their husbands. The study has two main objectives. The first is to demonstrate how language use helps to carry and reinforce gender relations. Secondly, the study sets to examine the influence of the changing social structure as demonstrated in the variables of education, age and region of origin on Yoruba women's use of address forms with their spouses.

Theoretical Background

There exists in several parts of the world, systems of gender norms and customs, which are manifested in several institutions such as in employment, governance and the household. The consequences of these norms and customs show on the interdependence and status of men and women. Social norms and customs do not only systematically discriminate against women in many traditions, they tend also to determine the roles that women and men have in the family

and the community at large (see Mukama, 1995). Also, in a number of societies, there seems to be some underlying assumptions that women are marginal, weak, powerless, subordinate and dependent on men. These assumptions do not only form some framework within which such societies operate in terms of the place of women, they get encoded in linguistic practices. Thus the gestures of power form an integral part of the place of women in the social scheme of things. These gestures tend to remind us daily of the subordinate status of women. The Yoruba culture, which is largely patriarchal and pro-male, is not immune to this tradition.

Research has shown that gender patterns are woven through many areas of social life including language behaviour (see for example, Lakoff, 1975, Spender, 1980; Tannen, 1990; Cameron, 1992; Brouwer, 1995 and Mukama, 1995). It has been demonstrated in many studies that language structure as well as language use embed gender relations. These relations manifest often in power inequality, superior - inferior status or the subordination of one sex to another. Feminist literature shows that the household is a major site for the reproduction of women's subordination. As noted by Dipo-Salami (2002: 24), the household has been seen as a unit, which acknowledges a common authority in domestic and budgetary matters. It is an important location for the expression of gender-based relations of power (Mehta, 1999: 5, citing Mallon, 1987) and the contractual nature of relations within it governs individual behaviour and interaction by defining the rights and obligations of every member. In more complex household structures, gender and age hierarchies apart from 'conjugal contract', also act as important factors in forming the basis for determining intra-household access to resources, organisation of labour and allocation of goods and services (Mehta, *ibid.*: *op.cit.*). Thus an increase in women's access to productive resources and income generally improves their status within the household. It must be mentioned, however, that even when women improve access to income, they may still be subordinated because of gender ideology and the social and cultural construction of roles and identities (e.g. their husbands as 'men') are equally important elements in determining intra-household relations and status. In the family, as in the outside world, hierarchical relationships of ruler to ruled and old to young (status and age) seem to typify the relationships between women and their spouses among the Yoruba. At the domestic front, power relations among the Yoruba are largely patriarchal and hegemonic masculinity predominates. This is because most of the time spouses do not enter a relationship from positions of equal status or power. Thus a man, very often, is the breadwinner - supporting his wife financially and, therefore, authorises her comings and goings and must give permission in whatever the wife wants to do. In other words, the woman is reliant and subordinate to her husband and therefore a relation of dependence and dominance tends to permeate and regulate many aspects of wife-husband interaction including the use of language. Here, the woman's actions are not likely to be voluntaristic but determined by her weak position within the house-hold.

Among the Yoruba, women do not often address or refer to their husbands by their first names (FN) but rather by some other forms of address. These forms may include the use of a term of endearment or pet name (PN) such as 'eleyin goolu' (gold-toothed) or the use of a teknonym (TKM) by prefixing the kin term 'baba' (father) to the name of a child as in 'Baba

Tomi' (Tomi's father). Their use of these address forms implicates a social structure that is interpretable both as relations of inequality and social distance. As wives, Yoruba women are expected, by their socialisation, to defer to their husbands who are considered their social superiors. For the Yoruba woman, the husband is the 'boss' or head of house-hold and, therefore, has a higher rank. Since age is also a measure of status among the Yoruba, a wife who is younger than her husband must also defer to the husband. This deference is realised, in terms of address or referring, in either of two ways. First, by the use of a teknonym and secondly, by the use of a pet name usually coined by the wife. In other words, the allocation of these linguistic resources within the household tends to help to shape the status of the Yoruba woman and reinforces her subordinate position. Her use of first name in addressing and/or referring to her husband is thus constrained by this social structure.

As observed in the literature, linguistic practices are prone to the influence of social forces. For example, in a study of address norms in post-1949 China, Fang and Heng (1983:56) show that the Chinese Cultural Revolution caused changes in address modes that are reflected in the patterns of language behaviour in China today. The changes taking place, today, in the social and economic life of the Yoruba woman, especially in terms of their educational attainment and economic independence, seem, however, to be impacting on the individual woman's perception of, and reaction to culturally imposed roles and expectations. These changes are likely to be reflected in the patterns of their use of address terms both with their husbands and in referring to their husbands. Feminist researchers have argued that apart from the cultural notions of gender in explanations of intra-household inequalities, there is a clear material context to the unequal relations, and that women face considerable insecurity and hardship due to lack of access to material resources (Mehta, 1999: 4). It is also held that if women are to challenge their economic and social subordination, access to material resources is as important as awareness of the ideological and cultural basis of gender inequity (Mehta, *op. cit.*, citing Calman, 1992; Kabeer, 1995 and Carr et al. 1996).

2 Methodology

Qualitative and quantitative data were collected in Ile-Ife using a questionnaire and audio-recorded interviews. The researcher, in conjunction with a young female undergraduate, conducted the interviews. The use of a female interviewer was introduced in order to minimise the possible effect of the presence of a male adult Yoruba on the direction of response of the interviewees. It is argued in the literature that female speakers or interviewees tend, very often, to respond in the direction of male linguistic ideology since the world is constructed, largely, in that ideology (Cameron, 1985). This is not to say, however, that the presence of a female interviewer would have made the respondents in this study to jettison this socially constructed reality totally in their responses.

The questionnaire was administered directly by us since some of the women interviewed were not literate. This method was also used in order to enable us record informal discussions with some of the respondents. Questions were drawn to seek information about the socio-demographic identities of the respondents and also about their use of address terms in contexts of interaction with their husbands. The contexts of interaction were those which we suspected, at the conception of the study, would influence the women's language use behaviour. The questions were framed around the following: how a woman would address her husband (1) **when together alone** (2) **when in the presence of husband's parents**, (3) **when in the presence of children** and (4) **during courtship**. The choice of these communication contexts derived from our ethnographic observation of the possible role of intimacy in the contexts and, therefore, the deployment of address terms among the Yoruba of Nigeria. These contexts seem, however, rather complex for strict categorisation or scaling in terms of intimacy or formality because their use interacts with certain cultural determinants. For example, the presence of parents-in-law could be said to be a formal or non-intimate situation and therefore a wife may not use the husband's first name (FN). The fact is that what is responsible for the none-selection of FN here is the woman's desire to show her parents-in-law that she is a respectful wife and one also that acknowledges her husband's higher status. In the Yoruba household, wives can be intimate with parents-in-laws, for example, in situations where mothers-in-law live in the same house-hold with their daughters-in-law.

A purposive method of sampling was used for this study, which made for uneven distribution of candidates in all the cells. This method involved looking specifically for candidates who met the conditions of the researcher. That is, they were Yoruba from South-western Nigeria, resident in Ile-Ife where the fieldwork took place and married (see Salami, 1986 for a discussion of this method). Sixty women, in all, were interviewed and they were stratified according to three age groups (<26, 26-44 and >44), four educational levels (no formal education (NFE), primary school education (PRY), secondary school education (SSE) and post-secondary school education (PSEC) and three Yoruba dialect regions- Northwest (NWY), Central (CY) and Southeast (SEY). The data was subsequently subjected to a quantitative analysis using percentiles.

3 Findings

In this section, I show in Tables 1 to 9, the reported use of the different address terms in four contexts: when alone with husband, in the presence of child(ren), in the presence of husband's and during courtship.

Table 1: Use of FN according to education and context

	ALONE	P-I-L	P-CHILD	COURTSHIP
NFE (11)	46% (5)	9% (1)	00 00	18% (2)
PRY (12)	33% (4)	00 00	00 00	42% (5)
SSE (19)	11% (2)	00 00	5% (1)	74% (14)
PSEC (18)	44% (8)	17% (3)	22% (4)	83% (15)
TOTAL (60)	32% (19)	7% (4)	8% (5)	60% (36)

* The percentage figures are to the nearest whole number.

ALONE = when together alone with husband

P-I-L = Presence of parents-in-law

P-Child = Presence of Child (ren)

Table 1 above summarises FN usage according to the levels of educational attainment of respondents in the four contexts mentioned. When alone with their husbands, 32% of the total number of the women respondents reported the use of FN when alone with their husband, 8% use FN in the presence of child(ren), 7% use it in the presence of their husbands' parents while 60% reported that they used FN during courtship. It must be noted that there could be overlap in the reports because usage of FN in one context does not exclude usage in another. The usage varies, however, from one educational level to another. Women with no formal education (NFE) have the highest percentage (46%) of those who reported the use of FN when alone with their husbands while the lowest percentage (11%) of women with secondary school education reported FN usage in this context. The table shows that the number of post-secondary school educated women (44%) (PSEC) who use FN when alone with their husbands is closer to that of the NFE women. In the presence of their child(ren), 8% of the total number of respondents reported the use of FN. When related to the level of their education none of the women in NFE and PRY groups reported the use of FN in the presence of their children while 5% and 22% of SSE and PSEC women respectively use FN in this context. In the presence of parents-in-law, 7% of the total number of respondents reported the use of FN.

Table 2: Use of FN according to age and context

	ALONE	P-I-L	P-CHILD	COURTSHIP
<26 (10)	30% (3)	10% (1)	20% (2)	70% (7)
26-44 (28)	39% (11)	7% (2)	7% (2)	71% (20)
>44 (22)	23% (5)	5% (1)	5% (1)	41% (9)
TOTAL (60)	32% (19)	7% (4)	8% (5)	60% (36)

* The percentage figures are to the nearest whole number

ALONE = when together alone with husband

P-I-L = Presence of parents-in-law

P-Child = Presence of Child (ren)

In Table 2, I show the relationship between FN usage and the age of spouses. When alone with their husbands, 39% of respondents between the ages of 26 and 44 claimed that they use FN while 30% and 23% of those in <26 and >44 groups respectively claimed they also use FN here. Table 2 also shows that in the context of presence of child(ren), 20% of those in under 26 age group, 7% and 5% of those in the 26-44 and >44 age groups respectively reported the use of FN. When parents-in-law are present, the highest percentage (10%) of women who claimed the use of FN comes from the under-26 group. In other words, reported FN usage decreases in this context, the greater the age of the women respondents (7% and 5% in the 26-44 and >44 groups respectively). In the context of courtship, more women below the age of 44 reported the use of FN (70% : <26 and 71% : 26-44) than those above the age of 44 (41%).

Table 3: Use of first name according to region and context

	ALONE	P-I-L	P-CHILD	COURTSHIP
NWY (20)	40% (8)	5% (1)	15% (3)	60% (12)
CY (30)	27% (8)	10% (3)	7% (2)	50% (15)
SEY (10)	30% (3)	00 00	00 00	90% (9)
TOTAL (60)	32% (19)	7% (4)	8% (5)	60% (36)

* The percentage figures are to the nearest whole number

ALONE = when together alone with husband

P-I-L = Presence of parents-in-law

P-Child = Presence of Child (ren)

In table 3, I show the reported usage of FN according to both region of origin of respondents and contexts of use. The highest percentage (40%) of spouses who reported the use of FN when alone with husband comes from the Northwest (NWY) region (e.g. Oyo) while 30% and 27% of spouses in the Southeast (SEY) and the Central (CY) regions respectively (e.g. Ijebu and Ekiti) reported the use of FN in this same context. In the presence of their children, 15% and 7% of respondents from NWY and CY regions respectively reported the use of FN while none of the women from the SEY region claimed to use FN in this context. In the presence of parents in-law the percentage of those who claimed to use FN is highest in CY (10%), 5% of those in NWY use FN and no spouse from SEY reported the use of FN here. The table also indicates that during courtship 90% of women from the SEY reported the use of FN while 60% and 50% of those from NWY and CY respectively claimed to use FN.

Table 4: Use of teknonym according to education and context

	ALONE	P-I-L	P-CHILD
NFE (11)	55% (6)	91% (10)	91% (10)
PRY (12)	33% (4)	92% (11)	83% (10)
SSE (19)	74% (14)	84% (16)	84% (16)
PSEC (18)	28% (50)	33% (6)	61% (11)
TOTAL (60)	48% (29)	72% (43)	78% (47)

* The percentage figures are to the nearest whole number

ALONE = when together alone with husband

P-I-L = Presence of parents-in-law

P-Child = Presence of Child (ren)

Table 4 above summarises the use of TKM by respondents according to the level of education and contexts of use. When they are alone with their husbands, the highest percentage of those who reported the use of TKM (74%) comes from those with secondary school education (SSE) while the lowest percentage (28%) comes from those with post-secondary education (PSEC). When parents-in-law are present, women in the PSEC group reported least the use of TKM (the percentages are NFE = 91%, PRY = 92%, SSE = 84%, and PSEC = 33%). In the presence of children most of the women reported the use of TKM. However, the highest percentage of TKM users in this context is those in the NFE group (91%) while those in the PSEC have the lowest percentage (61%).

Table 5: Use of TKM according to age and context

	ALONE	P-I-L	P-CHILD
26% (10)	30% (3)	50% (5)	60% (6)
26-44 (28)	46% (13)	75% (21)	86% (24)
>44 (22)	59% (13)	77% (17)	77% (17)
TOTAL (60)	48% (29)	72% (43)	78% (47)

* The percentage figures are to the nearest whole number

ALONE = when together alone with husband

P-I-L = Presence of parents-in-law

P-Child = Presence of Child (ren)

In Table 5, I show the relationship between respondents' age and use of TKM also in the different contexts investigated. The table shows that, just like in table 4, generally most of the women use TKM in the presence of both their parents-in-law and children (72% and 78% respectively). Only 48% would use TKM with their husbands when they are together alone. However, a breakdown of the groups show that a higher percentage (59%) of the women in the >44 age group reported the use of TKM more than any other group when they are together alone with their husbands. In the other two contexts, the under-26 age group has the lowest percentage of woman using TKM while there is no marked difference between the 26-44 and >44 groups.

Table 6: Use of TKM according to region and context

	ALONE	P-I-L	P-CHILD
NWY (20)	50% (10)	70% (14)	90% (18)
CY (30)	47% (14)	73% (22)	73% (22)
SEY (10)	50% (5)	70% (7)	70% (7)
TOTAL (60)	48% (29)	72% (43)	78% (47)

* The percentage figures are to the nearest whole number.

ALONE = when together alone with husband

P-I-L = Presence of parents-in-law

P-Child = Presence of Child (ren)

Table 6 above indicates the relationship between respondents' region of origin and TKM usage. It is shown in the table that most women across the three regions use TKM more than any other form of address both in the context of presence of parents-in-law and presence of child(ren). The picture we have, however, is that the percentages of the respondents who reported TKM usage in the presence of child(ren) are fairly equally distributed in the three regions (NWY: 70%, CY: 73% and SEY: 70%) while in the presence of parents-in-law, more women of the NWY region (90%) reported TKM than the women in any of the other two regions.

In table 7 below, I show the reported usage of PN. The table indicates that more women (18%) claimed to use PN in the context of courtship than in any other context. In terms of groups and contexts, 28% of PSEC women reported the use of PN when alone with their husbands. This percentage is higher than any other group. The same PSEC group records the highest percentage of respondents who claimed to use PN in the presence of their child(ren) and parents-in-law (33% and 22% respectively). In the context of courtship, more women within the NFE and PRY groups (30% and 33% respectively) claimed to use PN than the women from any of the remaining education groups.

Table 7: Use of PN according to education and context

	ALONE	P-I-L	P-CHILD	COURTSHIP
NFE (11)	00 00	00 00	00 00	27% (3)
PRY (12)	8% (1)	00 00	8% (1)	33% (4)
SSE (19)	16% (3)	11% (2)	16% (3)	11% (2)
PSEC (18)	28% (5)	33% (6)	22% (4)	11% (2)
TOTAL (60)	15% (9)	13% (8)	13% (8)	18% (11)

* The percentage figures are to the nearest whole number.

ALONE = when together alone with husband
P-I-L = Presence of parents-in-law
P-Child = Presence of Child (ren)

Table 8: Use of PN according to age and context

	ALONE	P-I-L	P-CHILD	COURTSHIP
26 (10)	40% (4)	30% (3)	30% (3)	20% (2)
26-44 (28)	7% (2)	11% (3)	4% (1)	14% (4)
>44 (22)	14% (3)	9% (2)	18% (4)	23% (5)
TOTAL (60)	15% (9)	13% (8)	13% (8)	18% (11)

* The percentage figures are to the nearest whole number.

ALONE = when together alone with husband

P-I-L = Presence of parents-in-law

P-Child = Presence of Child (ren)

In table 8 above, I show PN usage also according to age and context. In the three contexts: When alone with husband, presence of child(ren) and presence of parents-in-law, there are higher percentages of women of the under-26 age group who reported the use of PN (40%) than any other age group. It is only in the context of courtship that the women in above-44 age group have a higher percentage of those who reported usage of PN (23%) than any other group.

Table 9 below summarises the regional distribution of reported usage of PN. Here, we will notice that a higher percentage of the women from the SEY region, more than any other group, claimed to use PN in all contexts except during courtship. In the context of courtship, a higher percentage of women (27%) from the CY region reported PN usage than any other region. In fact, SEY women did not claim to use PN in the context of courtship at all.

Table 9: Use of PN according to region and context

	ALONE	P-I-L	P-CHILD	COURTSHIP
NWY (20)	10% (2)	10% (2)	5% (1)	15% (3)
CY (30)	17% (5)	10% (3)	13% (4)	27% (8)
SEY (10)	20% (2)	30% (3)	30% (3)	00 00
TOTAL (60)	15% (9)	13% (8)	13% (8)	18% (11)

* The percentage figures are to the nearest whole number.

ALONE = when together alone with husband

P-I-L = Presence of parents-in-law

P-Child = Presence of Child (ren)

4 Discussion of Findings

The findings given in the foregoing show that, generally, the reported use of each of the address forms by respondents vary according to both their social groupings and interactional contexts. In table 1, we will notice that a high percentage of the women (60%) reported the use of FN during courtship while their report decreases with contexts. In fact, what we observe is that their use of FN becomes more constrained in the presence of their children and in-laws where very negligible percentages of the women reported the use of FN. The interpretation of this behaviour, contextually, is rather complex. First, the women might be responding to the formality of the contexts where the presence of parents-in-law and children can be said to be more formal than in courtship context or when women are alone with their husbands. Secondly, however, it seems that this result can also be interpreted on the basis of the gender role-expectation of child-rearing among the Yoruba. For the Yoruba, women are held to be responsible for the traditional moral education of children. Thus women are expected to defer to their husbands to teach their children the 'moral' of deferring to a higher status as they, as wives, are not of equal relations with their husbands. Also as a 'good wife', it would be disrespectful on the part of a Yoruba woman to address her husband with FN when her in-laws are present as this is believed to amount to laying a bad example for her child(ren) as well as an attempt to lay claim to equality with her husband. This is not to say, however, that all the women behave in this same fashion. In fact, 7% of the total number of respondents reported the use of FN in the presence of parents-in-law. Although this percentage is negligible, this group of women can be described as 'norm-breakers' by daring to address their husbands by FN in the presence of their husbands' parents. Furthermore, when we examine the findings, we will observe that the reported usage of FN varies from one group to another according to the women's educational attainment, age and region of origin.

In terms of education, the pattern that seems to emerge is that except when alone with their husbands, a relatively higher percentage of women with the highest level of educational attainment (PSEC) reported the use of FN with their husbands than any other educational group. In other words, FN usage with spouse can be said to be a marker of Yoruba women's level of educational attainment. The PSEC women's behaviour is understandable on the ground of their higher education, which may motivate them to see themselves as power equals with their husbands. This is because their educational attainment could have contributed to enhancing their self-image in relation to their husband. It is a fact that today, the Yoruba woman can secure an employment, which makes her an economic equal of her husband.

In relation to age, the findings show that there is no marked difference between those in <26 and 26-44 age groups in FN usage. However, the lowest percentage of women reporting the use of FN in all contexts comes from those women in the >44 age group. There seems to be no apparent reason for the younger women's behaviour other than the fact most of them tend to use a form that shows that they are either intimate with their husbands or are social equals of their husbands. For the older women in the >44 age group, one immediate explanation of their behaviour is that these were women nurtured in the values of the traditional Yoruba society before the pervasive changes brought about by contact with the Europe. In that

tradition, women were not considered social equals of their husbands and, therefore, must not address their husbands by their first names. Apart from the fact that the older women might be resisting behaving 'unwifely' they, unlike the younger women, are less willing to break the cultural rule.

In the findings on FN usage and region of respondents, we see a consistent pattern of SEY women reporting FN less than either NWY or CY group. This is rather surprising, because SEY is the region where the honorific pronoun of standard Yoruba seems to have been lost. In other words, we would expect that they defer less to their husbands by using more FN than any of the other two regions where the honorific pronoun still occurs. One interpretation of this trend, however, could be that there is an ongoing change in the sociolinguistic behaviour of the Southeast women attributable, probably, to Western - mode modernization.

The findings of this study also indicate that the reported use of TKM varies according to the social/demographic identities of respondents as well as contexts. In terms of the women's levels of education, it can be observed that the highest percentage of users of TKM according to context comes from those in the no formal education (PRY) (92%) group while the lowest percentage comes from those in PSEC group (28%). This differentiation can be understood in terms of the relationship between the women's different levels of education and their different perceptions of their relationship to their husbands. As noted earlier in this paper, TKM usage seems to symbolize deference, distance and unequal relationship. While the more educated Yoruba women (PSEC) are probably beginning to be more inclined to see themselves as their husbands' social equals because of their own rising social and economic profiles, those with little or no education still consider their husbands as superiors. In other words, the educational status of the women plays a determinant role in their use of an address term.

As noted earlier (p. 17), the two contexts of parents-in-law and presence of child(ren) seem very crucial in the consideration of the women's gender roles (child-rearing) and social relations (unequal) with their husbands. As a wife, the Yoruba woman is expected to humble herself before her husband and, therefore, should defer to him. As a parent, she is expected to bring up a good child who would respect those in authority (by being respectful herself). Thus, in the presence of her parents-in-law, it is the 'good wife' who uses TKM as a form of address rather than her husband's first name (FN) while she also demonstrates an example of virtuous behaviour to her child(ren) when she does not address the child(ren)'s father by his first name. Do the foregoing role-expectation and relationships imply then that we should have seen all the women in the present investigation reporting the use of TKM in the two contexts mentioned? This is not likely because, just as we have pointed out in the discussion of FN usage earlier, there are still a few 'norm breakers'. These are found especially among those with post-secondary education (PSEC) and the under-26 age group.

Table 6 contains percentages of those who reported TKM usage according to the dialect regions of origin of the women interviewed. The significance of this social factor in the study of address terms among the Yoruba is in the fact that while honorific pronouns (E and èyin = You (pl)) are present in certain dialects (especially those of the Northwest), some dialects of the Central and South-eastern regions do not have any honorific pronoun. One, therefore,

suspects that it might be much more difficult to demonstrate deference in address terms in these dialects than in those dialects with honorifics. The findings show that relatively high percentages of the women across the three regions reported the use of TKM in most contexts. However, more women from the NWY region reported TKM usage in the context of parents-in-law than any other group. There is no apparent reason here to argue for this marked difference. One can only infer that because NWY region is the predominantly Oyo Yoruba-speaking region, the women in that region are likely to conform more to the Yoruba cultural norm (that wives don't address their husbands by name). This is a view based on the stereotype that the Oyo-Yoruba is very traditional in outlook. In other words, they are likely to be more conservative than the women from the other two regions.

Our findings show that in terms of the influence of social variables, education is a strong factor in the reported usage of PN among the respondents. In fact, what we see here is that more educated women would use PN when not using FN. If as suggested earlier that PN usage implies intimacy, our findings also indicate that it is the younger women who seem to show more intimacy with their husbands in most contexts except courtship where the older women (<44) show more intimacy by reporting the use of PN. There are two ways, however, by which we can interpret these trends. The first is that the younger women fall within the 60's generation - a generation that grew up during the era of structural adjustments (SAPs) in Nigeria when both men and women became breadwinners as many men lost their jobs. In other words, these women can be seen to now have relative bargaining power in their households as they have the strength of the fall back position and perceived contribution to the household (see Dipo-Salami, 2002 citing Sen, 1990). According to Odebode (1998: 39), increased economic independence increases the bargaining power of women in the household and that under economic crisis women are increasingly involved in economic activities and thus more economically independent. Thus those women using PN could afford to challenge the inequity in their household. This possibility is related to the agency of the women, which Berner (1998, cited in Dipo-Salami, 2002: 26) describes as the capacity of humans to ultimately decide what action to take. The literature on gender and development shows that women are not passive agents or victims of patriarchy but active subjects who are trying to respond to a situation of inequity and domination (see for example, Kandiyoti, 1998 and Mehta, 1999). Dipo-Salami (ibid: 64) shows that Yoruba women, who have been able to resist patriarchal control, seem to have been helped by possession of assets such as education, waged employment and productive and social capital. Thus, the Yoruba women whom we have described here as 'norm breakers' might be trying to contest the Yoruba patriarchal order through their choice of address terms. This contestation is, however, enhanced by their access to education and economic resources, which seem to have empowered them. The third interpretation could be that when a Yoruba woman grows older, there is less romance and more responsibility such that she begins to see herself more in the light of her role-expectation of child-rearing who should be a good example for her child(ren) to emulate. Therefore, she defers more to the husband in her older age by using less of PN.

The results of the present study also demonstrate that there is no systematic relationship between the use of PN and the region of origin of the women respondents. The only clear

picture is that a higher percentage of women from the SEY group, more than any other group, reported the use of PN. There are no apparent reasons for these patterns from the findings. What I suspect is the possibility of some interactional effect from say, education or age, which may require further investigation.

5 Conclusion

In this study, I have tried to show that the use of first names, teknonyms and pet names or terms of endearment as address forms by Yoruba women in relation to their spouses is not only variable but that the patterns of use can be structured according to the women's age, educational attainment and region of origin within the Yoruba-speaking South-western Nigeria. In FN usage, the study demonstrates also that changes in the role-relationships between a Yoruba man and his wife, from a fiancée to a wife and also as mother, have a significant impact on Yoruba women and their use of address terms. Furthermore, the paper shows that although in traditional Yoruba society wives do not address their husbands by first names in the presence of their parents-in-law and children, younger women and post-secondary educated women are, today, at the vanguard of violating this cultural norm. In other words, these groups of women are also at the forefront of motivating changes in the use of address terms by Yoruba women.

Finally, this study does not only have some implications for the understanding of the process of language change in Yoruba but it has also pointed to one area of language use from which we can understand the place of women among the Yoruba people.

References

- Akindele, Femi (1991): "And how shall I address you: A study of teknonym as an aspect of linguistic etiquette in Yoruba". In: Soyoye, F. A./Adewole, L. O. (eds.): 38-47.
- Brouwer, Dédé (1995): "Language and gender: feminist linguistics". In: Buikema, Rosemarie/Smelik, Anneke (eds): *Women's Studies and Culture: A feminist Introduction*. London: 40-55.
- Brown, Roger/Ford, Marguerite (1964): "Address in American English". In: Hymes, D. (ed.): 234-244.
- Brown, Roger/Gilman, Albert (1972): "The pronouns of power and solidarity". In: Giglioli, P.P.: 252-282.
- Cameron, Deborah (1992): *Feminism and Linguistic Theory*. London.
- Dipo-Salami, Olubunim M. (2002): "Stooping to Conquer?: Women Bargaining with Religion and Patriarchy in Ile-Ife, Nigeria". M. A. Thesis. The Hague: Institute of Social Studies.
- Ervin-Trip, Susan M. (1972): "Sociolinguistic Rules of Address". In: Pride, J. B./Holmes, J.: 225-240.
- Fang, Hanquan/Heng, J. H. (1983): "Social changes and changing address norms in China". *Language In Society* 12: 495-507.
- Fasold, Ralph W. (1990): *Sociolinguistics of Language*. Oxford.

- Giglioli, Pier Paolo (ed.) (1972): *Language and Social Context*. Harmondsworth.
- Hymes, Dell (1964): *Language in Culture and Society*. New York.
- Kandiyoti, Deniz (1998): "Gender, Power and Contestation: Rethinking bargaining with patriarchy". In: Jackson, R./Pearson, R. (eds.): *Feminist Visions of Development: Gender Analysis and Policy*. London/New York: 135-151.
- Kielkiewicz-Janowiak, Agnieszka (2000): "Review: Cross-cultural dimensions of politeness in the case of Polish and English". *Poznan Studies in Contemporary Linguistics* 36: 183-190.
- Lakoff, Robin (1975): *Language and Woman's Place*. New York.
- Mehta, Mona (1999): "Suppressed Subjects?: Gender Dynamics in the context of Agrarian Change and Seasonal Labour Migration in Dahanu Taluka Maharashtra". PhD Thesis. The Hague: Institute of Social Studies.
- Mukama, Ruth (1995): "Gender Stereotyping in African Languages". In Akinlabi, A. (ed): *Theoretical Approaches to African Linguistics*. Trenton, New Jersey: 375-392.
- Odebode, Olasunbo A. (1998): "Coping with Economic Crisis: Changing Livelihood Strategies and Gender Relations amongst Women in the Urban Informal Sector in Ibadan, Nigeria". M.A. Thesis. The Hague: Institute of Social Studies.
- Pride, John Bernard/Holmes, Janet (1972): *Sociolinguistics*. Harmondsworth.
- Salami, L. Oladipo (1986): "Problems and Prospects of urban sociolinguistic survey in Africa: Notes from Ile-Ife, Nigeria". *Anthropological Linguistics* 28, 4: 473-483.
- Soyoye, Festus Ayòdèjì/Adewole, Lawrence Olufemi (eds.) (1991): *In Honour of Professor Ayo Bamgbose, Ile-Ife: Department of African Languages and Literatures*. Obafemi Awolowo University. (= *Ife African Languages and Literatures* 3)
- Spender, Dale (1980): *Man Made Language*. London.