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Address Terms in Hawrami Kurdish: A Sociolinguistic and Critical Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims to investigate address terms in Hawrami, a Kurdish dialect spoken mainly in the Paveh region of western Iran. It explores how speakers of Hawrami use a variety of linguistic resources—such as kinship terms, pronouns, occupational titles, and religious titles—to indicate social roles, relationships, and values. Drawing on sociolinguistic and discourse-analytic frameworks, in particular the work of Brown and Gilman (1960), the present paper examines how the social variables such as age, gender, power, solidarity, and religious ideology shape address practices. Data were collected through ethnographic observation and interviews in Paveh. Given the lack of written documentation and the deeply contextual nature of address practices, a qualitative method based on direct observation and community-based immersion was considered the most appropriate choice. The ethnographic method is especially suitable for studying linguistic behavior in small, localized speech communities, where language usage is closely tied to cultural norms, relationships, and everyday social practices. The findings show that address forms in Hawrami do more than merely serve communicative functions; they embody cultural values and reflect broader ideological shifts, particularly those following the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran. This study contributes to the documentation of an understudied minority dialect and provides insight into the intricate relationship between language, identity, and power in multilingual and multiethnic societies.

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1. Introduction

Language is a social phenomenon. Its use in everyday life is deeply intertwined with the social fabric of the communities where it is spoken. Among the many ways that language reflects social structure, address terms—words and expressions used to refer to or address others—offer particularly rich insight into interpersonal relations, social hierarchies, group identity, and cultural values.

This paper examines the address system of the Hawrami dialect, a lesser-known variety of Kurdish spoken in the Hawraman region of western Iran, with a particular focus on the city of Paveh. According to Abbasi et al. (2013), Hawrami is spoken in a mountainous area between eastern and southern Kurdistan known as Hawraman, with approximately one hundred thousand speakers. The dialect includes three major varieties—Lahoni, Takhti, and Zhawaroyi—as well as a fourth, Păwayăna, spoken in Paveh, the main town of Hawraman. Although Hawrami is traditionally regarded as a dialect of Kurdish, like other varieties spoken in the vast Kurdish-speaking regions of western Iran, the branching of Kurdish dialects and sub-dialects is not clear yet, and the precise status of Hawrami among other Kurdish dialects remains a matter of controversy.

Despite its rich oral tradition, unique phonological and grammatical structures, and centuries-old literary heritage, Hawrami has received little attention in linguistic scholarship, particularly in the area of sociolinguistics. The present study seeks to fill this gap by exploring how address terms in Hawrami are shaped by and reflected in key social variables such as age, gender, religion, and power, with a specific emphasis on the impact of ideological change following the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Address terms are not merely functional; they encode power relations, politeness strategies, intimacy, formality, distance, and social norms. As Brown and Gilman (1960) famously argued, the choice between familiar and formal pronouns (T/V distinction) in many European languages reflects two semantic dimensions: power and solidarity. While some languages make this distinction explicitly in pronouns, others—such as Persian or English—reflect it through other linguistic strategies, including titles, kinship terms, and honorifics. Hawrami, like many minority languages, employs a range of such devices, making its address system both complex and socially rich.

The significance of studying address terms in Hawrami lies in the lack of prior documentation and formal analysis. As a primarily oral language with limited written resources, much of what is known about Hawrami has been passed down through generational usage, poetry, and informal discourse. Moreover, the sociopolitical changes that have shaped modern Iran—including the rise of the Islamic Republic—have left a clear imprint on the ways people address one another. Ideologically charged terms like *brother* and *sister* or religious titles such as *Mulla* ("a muslim clergy") and *Sheikh* ("a religious leader") have entered or gained prominence in the speech of Hawrami speakers, particularly in formal or semi-formal contexts.

The significance of address terms goes beyond the individual interaction. As Sharifian (2015) argues, language reflects cultural conceptualizations, and address terms offer a window into a community's worldview. In this light, examining address terms in Hawrami not only reveals how speakers preserve relationships but also reveals how they construct and reconstruct identity, community boundaries, and moral values in changing social landscapes.

In what follows, first, relevant theoretical frameworks and previous studies in sociolinguistics and address terms are reviewed. Then, the methodology used to collect data in

the field is presented, including ethnographic techniques and participant observation. The core of the paper is a detailed analysis of the different types of address terms used in Hawrami, categorized by function and sociocultural context. These categories include kinship terms, occupational and religious titles, personal names, and honorific markers. The discussion links these forms to broader social variables and ideological shifts, particularly those associated with post-revolutionary Iran. The paper concludes with reflections on the implications of these findings for Kurdish sociolinguistics, minority language research, and the interplay between language and power in multilingual contexts.

2. Literature Review

The study of address terms occupies a significant place in sociolinguistics and pragmatics, where language is not only seen as a means of communication but also seen as a reflection of social structures, roles, and ideologies. Address terms serve as linguistic markers of social distance, intimacy, power, respect, and solidarity. Over the past several decades, various scholars have approached this topic from different perspectives, with foundational contributions by Brown and Gilman (1960) and subsequent developments in fields such as politeness theory, critical discourse analysis (CDA), and linguistic anthropology.

2.1 The T/V Distinction and Brown and Gilman's Framework

In their seminal work, Brown and Gilman (1960) introduced the concept of the T/V distinction, based on the use of familiar (T = *tu* "you, informal") and polite (V = *vous* "you, formal") second person pronouns in European languages such as French, German, and Italian. They proposed that the use of these pronouns reflects two key semantic dimensions: power and solidarity. When power is unequal, the higher-status individual may use T while expecting V in return. In symmetrical relationships, the choice between T and V is governed by solidarity—mutual intimacy or distance.

Although the T/V dichotomy is based on Indo-European pronouns, the theoretical insight extends beyond European languages. In many languages, including Persian and Hawrami Kurdish, T/V-like distinctions exist through other means such as kinship terms, titles, and honorifics. Brown and Gilman's (1960) model, thus, remains a key framework for analyzing address behavior cross-linguistically.

2.2 Address Terms and Politeness Theories

Further theoretical contributions were made by scholars such as Brown and Levinson (1987), who developed a universal theory of politeness grounded in the concepts of face and face-threatening acts (FTAs). In this model, the use of formal address terms serves as a negative politeness strategy aimed at minimizing imposition. Informal or intimate address terms function as positive politeness strategies to emphasize solidarity and inclusion. While Brown and Levinson's framework has been influential, it has also faced criticism for its Western bias and limited applicability to non-Western cultures. Scholars such as Matsumoto (1988) and Ide (1989) have pointed out that politeness in East Asian and other honor-based societies cannot be fully explained using individualistic concepts of face and that socio-cultural norms must be incorporated into analysis.

2.3 Critical Discourse Analysis and Address Terms

More recent approaches have incorporated critical discourse analysis (CDA) to examine how language reproduces and challenges social power and ideology. Scholars such as Fairclough (1989) and Wodak (2001) argue that address terms are not neutral—they are socially loaded and often ideological. The choice of an address term can reflect or resist dominant ideologies, reinforce hierarchies, or mark resistance to authority. In post-revolutionary Iran, for example, the widespread adoption of address terms such as *baradar* ("brother") and *xahar* ("sister") in public discourse reflected the ideological emphasis on Islamic unity and egalitarianism. These terms replaced more hierarchical or monarchical titles used under the previous regime. Similar ideological shifts have occurred in other languages following revolutions or regime changes, as noted by Lee-Wong (1994) in Mandarin Chinese during and after the Cultural Revolution.

2.4 Typologies of Address Terms

Across languages, address terms can be classified into several categories:

- pronouns of address (e.g., T/V),
- kinship terms (used literally or metaphorically),
- personal names (first name, last name, combinations),
- titles and honorifics (professional, religious, political), and
- zero address (avoidance of any term).

Each category can serve different pragmatic and social functions depending on context, speaker-hearer relationship, and cultural expectations. Brown and Ford (1961) expanded the typology of address terms in American English to include variations such as first name (FN), title + last name (TLN), and asymmetrical combinations (e.g., FN vs. TLN). They found that factors such as familiarity, formality, occupational rank, and age influence which forms are chosen. This model has been applied to other languages, including Persian (Keshavarz, 1988, 2001), where similar asymmetrical and symmetrical address patterns exist.

2.5 Studies in Persian and Iranian Languages

Research on Persian address terms (Keshavarz, 1988, 2001; Mir-Saeedi, 1997) has shown that Persian exhibits a range of polite and impolite forms based on age, social rank, gender, and formality. For example, *ʃomɑ* ("you, formal") is used as the respectful second person pronoun, while *tu* ("you, informal") is used among equals, friends, or younger people. The use of kinship terms such as *ɑqɑ* ("Mr.") and *xɑnom* ("Mrs."), as well as religious titles like *hɑji* ("Haji, title for somone who has performed the pligrimage to Mecca"), *mullɑ* ("Mulla, a muslim clergy"), or *ostɑd* ("Master, Teacher") are also common. These studies also highlight how address terms both reflect and reinforce social hierarchies, particularly in formal and institutional settings. Notably, after the Islamic Revolution in 1979, several new address terms became popular, reflecting Islamic ideology, such as *barɑdar* ("brother") and *xɑhar* ("sister").

However, although Persian has been studied fairly extensively, Kurdish dialects—particularly Hawrami—remain largely undocumented. As Fasold (1990) noted, Asian and African languages, especially minority languages, are underrepresented in sociolinguistic literature on address. This study aims to fill this gap by focusing on Hawrami, a dialect that has received virtually no scholarly attention in terms of address term analysis.

2.6 Cross-Cultural and Comparative Insights

Comparative research also underscores the variability of address systems. In Italian, for instance, Bates and Benigni (1975) identified a three-way system: *tu* (T), *Lei* (V1), and *Voi* (V2), with V1 used formally and V2 within families with respect. In Swedish, Paulston (1976) documented changes from a rigid pronoun hierarchy to a more egalitarian du-based system in the 20th century, following social democratization. In Mandarin Chinese, as studied by Lee-Wong (1994), address terms underwent shifts aligned with changing political ideologies across three historical periods: before the revolution, during Cultural Revolution, and after the revolution.

In Hawrami, as this paper will show, kinship terms, religious honorifics, and occupational titles function similarly to pronouns in marking power and solidarity. Yet, they also reflect the unique cultural values of the Hawraman region, which blends tribal, religious, and modern influences.

3. Method

This study adopts a qualitative ethnographic approach to investigate the use of address terms in Hawrami, a Kurdish dialect spoken in Paveh and its surrounding areas in western Iran. Given the lack of written documentation and the deeply contextual nature of address practices, a qualitative method based on direct observation and community-based immersion was the most appropriate choice. The ethnographic method is particularly suitable for studying linguistic behavior in small, localized speech communities, where language usage is closely tied to cultural norms, relationships, and everyday social practices.

3.1 Rationale for Ethnographic Approach

Ethnography in sociolinguistics involves long-term, immersive observation of language use within its natural social context. Unlike surveys or purely textual analysis, ethnography allows the researcher to witness how language is shaped by and shapes social interactions in real time. As address terms are sensitive to setting, status, and relationships, observing them in authentic interactional contexts provides deeper insight than questionnaires alone. In another study, the non-native learners' comprehension of the social functions of Persian address forms in the context of Persian as a second language was assessed, based on the hypothesis that non-native Persian learners have a limited understanding of the social functions of Persian address strategies (Saberi, 2002).

Given that the Hawrami dialect is primarily oral and not standardized in writing and that it is spoken within a tightly-knit, semi-tribal, and religiously conscious community, traditional methods of data collection such as corpus analysis or experimental surveys would not yield the rich contextual understanding necessary for this study. Therefore, the researcher adopted the dual role of participant and observer—a role made possible by being a native speaker and a long-term member of the Hawrami-speaking community.

3.2 Fieldwork and Data Collection

Data for this study were collected in the city of Paveh, located in Kermanshah Province near the western Iranian borders, where Hawrami is widely spoken. The region is culturally rich and linguistically diverse, but Hawrami remains one of the most deeply rooted local dialects. The primary methods of data collection included:

participant observation: The researcher attended social gatherings, religious ceremonies, markets, family visits, and educational settings. Natural conversations were observed and discreetly documented without disrupting the flow of interaction.

- **informal interviews**: Over 40 semi-structured interviews were conducted with speakers of various ages, genders, and social statuses. Questions focused on how they address others in different contexts, and how they feel about various address terms.
- **field notes**: Detailed observational notes were taken, including contextual data such as location, relationship between speakers, tone, and nonverbal cues.
- **self-reflection and linguistic intuition**: As a native speaker, the researcher drew on personal experiences, linguistic awareness, and memory to supplement observed data.

While audio recordings were desirable, many participants declined to be recorded due to privacy concerns and social sensitivities, particularly in religious or gender-segregated settings. Instead, permission was obtained for note-taking, and transcriptions were made immediately after interactions to preserve accuracy.

3.3 Participant Demographics

The participants' demographics are as follows:

- **age range**: from teenagers (13+) to elderly speakers (70+),
- **gender**: roughly balanced between male and female speakers,
- **occupation**: teachers, clerics, merchants, students, housewives, government employees, and farmers, and
- **religious roles**: Mulla ("a muslim clergy"), Quran teachers, and participants in religious rituals.

This diverse sample enabled the researcher to examine how address terms varied across multiple social variables such as age, gender, occupation, and context.

3.4 Analytical Framework

The analysis is based on qualitative coding of address terms and their contextual use, drawing from sociolinguistic theories of politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987), power and solidarity (Brown & Gilman, 1960), and ideological critique (Fairclough, 1989; Wodak, 2001). Address terms were categorized into thematic groups—including kinship terms, occupational and religious titles, pronouns, honorifics, and political terms—and then analyzed for their function in conveying respect, familiarity, hierarchy, or ideological alignment.

Attention was also paid to

- symmetrical vs. asymmetrical use of address terms,
- shift in usage across generations,
- the replacement or innovation of forms after the 1979 Revolution, and
- differences in speech between genders and across public vs. private settings.

3.5 Limitations

This study encountered several challenges, including:

- **limited written sources and corpus**: Very few academic or literary works exist in Hawrami, and most documentation is poetic rather than conversational.
- **dialectal variation**: Hawrami includes several sub-varieties (e.g., in Halabja, Tawila, and rural villages). However, this study focused solely on the urban Paveh dialect due to logistical constraints.
- **access and mobility**: Due to geographic and financial limitations, the researchers were unable to conduct fieldwork in all Hawrami-speaking areas.
- **sensitivity of content**: Certain address terms—particularly those tied to religion, gender, or political affiliations—were difficult to elicit due to social taboos or fear of other factors.

Despite these limitations, the insider status of the researcher and the extended duration of observation helped mitigate many of these challenges and provided access to authentic and varied linguistic data.

4. Results and Analysis

This section presents the core findings of the study. Drawing on the data collected from ethnographic fieldwork, the present research categorizes and analyzes the address terms used in Hawrami, with particular attention to how social variables such as age, gender, religion, and political ideology influence their use. The analysis demonstrates that address terms in Hawrami reflect a multi-layered system of social relationships, encoded through a variety of linguistic means.

4.1 Categories of Address Terms in Hawrami

Based on the data, Hawrami address terms can be broadly categorized into the following types:

- kinship terms,
- religious titles and expressions,
- occupational titles,
- personal names (first name/full name/nickname),
- honorifics and politeness markers,
- political and ideological terms, and
- pronouns and zero address.

Each of these categories plays a distinct role in interpersonal communication and is closely tied to the social fabric of the Hawrami-speaking community.

4.2 Kinship Terms: Markers of Respect and Solidarity

Kinship terms (e.g., *aḍα* "mother," *bαba* "father," *wαlə* "sister," *brα* "brother," etc.) are frequently used outside actual familial relationships to indicate respect, solidarity, or emotional proximity. For example:

- *Bαbaw Salih-i* ("Father Salih") may be used to refer to or address an elderly man in the community, even if he is not the speaker's father.
- *wαlə* ("sister") or *brα* ("brother") may be used among equals, particularly in formal or religious settings, following the post-revolution Islamic discourse.

- In teacher-student interactions, terms like *Mɑmosɑ* ("teacher") are often combined with kinship markers, e.g., *Mɑmosɑ bɑba* or *Mɑmosɑ aḍɑ* for added politeness.

This extension of kinship terminology suggests a collectivist culture where social boundaries are softened through familial metaphor, reinforcing in-group solidarity.

4.3 Religious Titles: Moral Authority and Hierarchical Distance

Religious figures in Hawrami-speaking communities are often addressed using highly respectful forms, including:

- ***Məlɑ*** (mulla): It isused for clerics and mosque leaders.
- ***Şêx*** (Sheikh): It Conveys both religious knowledge and social authority, sometimes inherited through family lines.
- ***faqi*** ("a student of a religious school"): It is used in villages and religious schools that are usually inside mosques.

Religious address terms often function in hierarchical contexts, establishing asymmetry between the speaker and the addressee. They are used both sincerely (as signs of reverence) and strategically (to seek favor or express deference). Notably, the use of such terms has expanded in public discourse since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, as state ideology has promoted religious values across the public sphere. In contrast, pre-revolution terms tied to monarchy or tribalism (e.g., *Khân*, *Bag*) have largely disappeared or carry outdated connotations.

4.4 Occupational Titles: Prestige and Modern Roles

Occupational titles also play a major role in establishing respectful or formal address. Common examples include:

- *Mɑmosɑ* ("teacher"),
- *Dogdər* ("doctor"),
- *Mohandəs* ("engineer"), and
- *Qazî* ("judge or Islamic legal authority").

These forms can be used either independently or in combination with personal names (e.g., *Dogdər Hemin*, *Mɑmosɑ Farhad*, *Mohandəs Sara*). They often replace pronouns, especially in formal or semi-formal interactions. Such titles not only denote occupation but also signal education level and institutional power. Interestingly, in private or informal contexts, some of these titles are omitted or humorously modified (e.g., *Mɑmosɑ* becoming *Mamo* among peers).

4.5 Personal Names and Name Combinations

Hawrami speakers use personal names in several configurations:

- **first name only**: It indicates intimacy or equality (e.g., *Hiwɑ*, *ʃilɑn*).
- **full name (first + last)**: It is used in more formal contexts, often in professional or public discourse.
- **name with title**: It appears in forms such as *Mɑmosɑ Hiwɑ* or *Dr. Kɑwa*.
- **nicknames or diminutives**: They are used in intimate, humorous, or childhood contexts.

The choice of form depends heavily on age, relationship, and setting. For example, a younger person rarely addresses an elder by first name alone unless invited to do so. Moreover, in public announcements or ceremonial events, full names and titles are used as a way to index prestige and public recognition, whereas the use of nicknames tends to signal solidarity or personal closeness.

4.6 Honorifics and Politeness Markers

Hawrami makes use of various honorific markers that signal politeness, respect, and social hierarchy. These include:

- ***Xɑn*/*Khan***: It is a legacy of Persian and Turkish influence, still occasionally used for elder women (e.g., *Maryam Xan*).
- ***Saruçamɑn***: It is a regional expression of honor, similar to "your grace" or "respected one."
- **verb constructions**: They involve the use of plural verb forms (similar to *ʃoma* ["you"] in Persian) to show deference, particularly when addressing elders or respected figures.
- **compounded titles**: They include forms such as *Mɑmosɑ-w-pɑwaye*, which add a layer of politeness and local pride.

These markers function in high-context interactions—ceremonial greetings, religious events, and public speeches—and are often omitted in casual or intra-generational communication.

4.7 Political and Ideological Address Terms

The 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran had a profound effect on address terms across the country, and Hawrami was no exception. Several ideological address terms were introduced or gained prominence:

- ***brɑ* ("brother") and *wɑlə* ("sister")**: These kinship terms were repurposed as Islamic revolutionary address terms, especially in political and religious contexts.
- ***ʃahid* ("martyr")**: It is used for those killed in war or in ideological struggle, and is often invoked honorifically (e.g., *Mɑmosɑ ʃahid Kawa*).
- **avoidance of monarchical terms**: Words such as *Bag*, *Mir*, and *ʃɑzɑḍa*—previously used in tribal or aristocratic address—went out of use and were sometimes viewed as reactionary.

Post-revolution address norms also reflect Islamic egalitarian discourse, promoting forms that obscure class divisions and emphasize shared faith and sacrifice. At the same time, this ideological transformation has led to semantic shifts: words like *brɑ* ("brother") no longer indicate biological kinship alone, but rather ideological affinity. As Lee-Wong (1994) noted in her study of Chinese address terms post-Cultural Revolution, such changes reflect deep realignments in social ideology, not just vocabulary.

4.8 Pronouns and Zero Address

Unlike many Indo-European languages with clear T/V pronoun systems, Hawrami lacks distinct formal/informal pronouns. Instead, speakers rely on

- contextual cues,
- title and name combinations,
- verb agreement and tone, and
- avoidance (zero address).

Zero address is particularly notable in hierarchical relationships. For example, a young speaker may speak to a religious elder or teacher without employing any explicit address term, relying on gestures, deference, and indirect speech. This phenomenon reflects deference through omission, a strategy also documented in Japanese and Korean. It is not only a sign of social distance but also a sign of deep respect and cultural modesty.

4.9 Gendered Patterns in Address

Although Hawrami is not overtly gendered in grammar, address practices reveal nuanced gender dynamics:

- Women are addressed more often with kinship or title + name combinations (e.g., *wɑlə Shirin-a*, *xɑnom Ahmadi*).
- Men receive more occupational titles or religious titles (e.g., *Mɑmosɑ Hiwa*, *ʃəx Salar*).
- Among peers, women tend to use softened or metaphorical forms, particularly in public, whereas men may rely on direct names or occupational terms.

Gender also intersects with age: younger women often show greater adherence to formal address, especially when speaking to older men or authority figures.

4.10 Generational and Contextual Shifts

Address practices in Hawrami are also shifting across generations:

- Younger speakers (under 30) increasingly use first names, sometimes even in formal settings, particularly under the influence of Persian and global media.
- Elder speakers maintain more rigid structures, using full titles and religious terms.
- Urban and rural speakers differ. Urban youth in Paveh often adapt hybrid forms, such as *Dogdər Kɑwa geyan* ("dear Dr. Kɑwa"), whereas rural communities maintain more conservative practices.

Such generational shifts suggest that address terms are semi-stable linguistic features, capable of rapid change under ideological, technological, or educational influence.

5. Discussion

The analysis of address terms in Hawrami presented in the previous section reveals a complex interplay of language, social structure, and ideology. Address terms in this Kurdish dialect do not merely serve communicative functions but act as symbolic resources through which speakers construct social reality, negotiate relationships, and encode power dynamics. In this section, we interpret the findings in relation to theoretical frameworks and comparative insights.

5.1 Address Terms as Social Indexes

As Brown and Gilman (1960) posited, address terms reflect either power differentials or

solidarity between interlocutors. In Hawrami, this dual function is particularly evident:

- Power is encoded through religious and occupational titles (*ʃəx*, *Mɑmosɑ*, *Qɑzî*), hierarchical politeness markers (*Saruçamɑn*), and asymmetrical zero address.
- Solidarity is expressed via kinship metaphors (*brɑ*, *wɑlə*) and the strategic use of first names or nicknames among peers.

These patterns indicate that Hawrami speakers are acutely aware of social rank and relational intimacy, and they navigate these dimensions with finely tuned linguistic choices. In many cases, a single address term performs both functions—such as *Mɑmosɑ aḍɑ*, which conveys both authority and maternal warmth.

5.2 Ideological Shifts and Language Change

One of the most striking findings of this study is the impact of the 1979 Islamic Revolution on address terms. Just as in Persian, where terms like *barɑdar* and *xɑhar* became ideologically loaded, Hawrami adopted similar changes:

- Religious and revolutionary terms gained new semantic power, often displacing older, tribal or aristocratic forms.
- Address terms became markers of political alignment, particularly in public discourse and formal speech.

This aligns with Lee-Wong's (1994) findings in Chinese, where terms like *tangzhi* evolved in meaning across sociopolitical eras. In both cases, macro-level ideological shifts reshaped micro-level linguistic practices, especially forms of address which are highly visible in public interactions.

5.3 Gender and Address Behavior

The findings also support previous research on gendered language use (e.g., Holmes, 2002). In Hawrami, although the language does not mark gender grammatically, address behavior reveals:

- greater use of honorifics and titles when addressing women in public,
- avoidance of direct naming of women in certain settings due to modesty norms, and
- more formal use of address terms by women, particularly in intergenerational or public contexts.

This pattern reflects broader patriarchal social norms embedded in the region's religious and cultural framework, where linguistic politeness serves to preserve gendered boundaries.

5.4 Language Contact and Generational Change

Urban Hawrami speakers, particularly younger generations, show clear influence from Persian and media-driven global language habits:

- more frequent use of first names without titles,
- mixing of Persian or English occupational titles, such as *Dogdər* ("Doctor") and *Mohandəs* ("engineer"), into Hawrami speech, and
- declining use of traditional politeness markers in informal settings.

These trends indicate ongoing language change and a gradual erosion of traditional address norms. This echoes the situation in Swedish (Paulston, 1976), where democratization and urbanization led to a collapse of the hierarchical pronoun system in favor of a single

egalitarian *du* form. In Hawrami, however, such change is more layered: older forms persist in religious and rural contexts, while younger speakers innovate new combinations or simplify address conventions.

5.5 Address as Cultural Practice

Hawrami address terms are not only social tools but also cultural performances. Each choice of term enacts a role, a stance, and a position within a moral and social order. The recurrence of kinship metaphors—even among strangers—suggests that relationships in Hawrami society are viewed through the lens of familial responsibility and emotional bonds. Moreover, address avoidance (zero address) shows that respect can be communicated not only through speech but also through silence. This supports the idea that linguistic politeness is not merely about what is said but also about what is withheld—a point emphasized in politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987) and supported by anthropological linguists such as Irvine (1996).

5.6 Theoretical Implications

The investigation of the Hawrami address system can support key ideas in linguistic anthropology as well as critical discourse studies:

- The use of language is influenced by ideologies and the different contexts in which it is used; even simple address terms reflect broader systems of belief, power, and identity.
- Minority languages like Hawrami, often viewed as "traditional" or "static," are in fact dynamic and demonstrate changes according to social, cultural, and political changes.
- Address practices are significant sources for studying social change, particularly in post-revolutionary or multilingual societies.

6. Conclusion

This study has explored the intricate system of address terms in Hawrami, a Kurdish dialect spoken in the Paveh region of western Iran. Drawing on ethnographic data and sociolinguistic theory, it has demonstrated how these forms function not merely as tools of reference but as markers of identity, power, solidarity, and ideology. Address terms in Hawrami are deeply embedded in the social and cultural fabric of the community, and they reflect both continuity and change in linguistic practice.

The findings show that Hawrami speakers use a wide range of address terms—including kinship terms, religious and occupational titles, honorifics, and personal names—to conduct complex social relationships. These linguistic choices are influenced not only by factors such as age, gender, status, and setting but also by broader historical and ideological forces. In particular, the Islamic Revolution of 1979 marked a turning point in the ideological framing of language use, introducing new address norms grounded in religious values and political solidarity.

Address practices in Hawrami reveal a dual orientation: on the one hand, they preserve traditional structures of respect and social hierarchy; on the other hand, they are open to innovation and adaptation, especially among younger generations. The growing influence of Persian, global media, and modern education has contributed to the simplification of some traditional forms, the hybridization of others, and the gradual shift toward more symmetrical

patterns of address. From a theoretical perspective, the study confirms that address forms are a rich site for investigating the interaction between language and society. They illustrate how speakers position themselves and others, how power and intimacy are negotiated, and how ideologies are both enacted and challenged in everyday discourse. For minority languages such as Hawrami, the study of address forms also serves a preservationist function, documenting linguistic practices that are at risk of marginalization or erasure.

In sum, address terms in Hawrami are more than linguistic labels—they are cultural artifacts, ideological tools, and social performances. Understanding them deepens our appreciation for the richness of minority language practices and the ways in which language indexes identity, hierarchy, and belonging in multilingual societies like Iran.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest related to this research.

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