Variability of Russian forms of address in authentic oral speech –

A look at ORD data

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Forms of address in Russian: previous research

(1) Studies dealing with **inventory of forms of address** in Russian (core system of address vs. occasional forms), often from a contrastive perspective (cf. Afonin 2011, Berger 1995, Buchenau 1997, Nikolaeva 1969, Rathmayr 1992 & many others)

(2) Studies considering **social factors** (e.g., social distance, status, formality) and their impact on the distribution of forms of address (Rathmayr 1992, Zemskaja 1997)

(3) Studies investigating **changes in address system** of Russian after the Perestroika (Krouglov 1996, Krongauz 2004, 2008)
Central forms of address in Standard Russian

**Components:** First name (FN) – Patronymic (PN) – [Mr./Mrs. – Title]

- formal

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+ formal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FN Hypocoristic form Sashen’ka</th>
<th>FN Short form Sasha</th>
<th>FN Full form Aleksandr</th>
<th>FN + PN Aleksandr Ivanovich</th>
<th>Mr./Mrs. + title gospodin prezident</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ty [familiar pronominal a.]</td>
<td>vy [distant pronominal address]</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- distant

(cf. Berger 1995)
Forms of address in Russian

Critique of previous research

- most (Russian) studies are prescriptive by nature

- bulk of studies take a macroanalytic perspective in characterizing the individual forms and extralinguistic factors that influence their use (often questionnaire data!)

- suggests some kind of stability and homogeneity with regard to their use and dependence on extralinguistic factors

- Missing: studies that take a microanalytic approach, thus considering variability in the use of forms of address in Russian by individual speakers in individual encounters
Data

• **Data were taken from the ORD Speech Corpus of Russian Everyday Communication**


- main aim of the ORD speech corpus is to fix Russian spontaneous speech in natural communicative situations
- one of the largest resources of contemporary spoken Russian: by 2016: about 1200 h of recordings, presenting speech of 127 respondents and hundreds of their interlocutors
- participants volunteered to spend a whole day with a switched-on voice recorder, recording all their verbal communication
Data

- data were gathered in St. Petersburg only (Standard language is dominating, no significant impact from dialects or other languages, population is professionally heterogeneous and unbiased in terms of age and gender distribution)
- only speech of “naïve” native speakers of Russian recorded
- currently sociolinguistic extension of the corpus:
  - defining social groups which should be represented in the corpus in adequate numbers
  - setting criteria for selecting participants
- speech transcripts add up to 1 mln words
- 2,450 macro episodes of everyday spoken communication have been already annotated
- unfortunately corpus not available online, no free access
Data

• **Advantages of using ORD data**
  - Authentic interactions, allow for a sequential approach and investigation of negotiations of terms of address
  - Wide range of interlocutors represented by recorded speakers (variability of address with regard to addressees)
  - Different encounters with the same interlocutors (variability of address with regard to situation, emotional stance etc.)

• **Problems of using ORD data**
  - Scarce background information on most addressees, especially on the interlocutors of recorded participants (mostly only information about role: „neighbour“, „colleague“, „student“)
Data for current study

(1) Speaker S-05

- Elena Anatol’evna, female, aged 27, born in Naberezhnye Chelny, university degree, lecturer in psychology
- Interactions with following groups of addressees:
  - neighbours (file 01-03, 21-23)
  - friend (04)
  - photoshop assistant (05)
  - colleagues (06-07, 17-19)
  - students (08-16)
  - family members (20)
Data for current study

(2) Speaker S-35

- Vitalij Alekseevich, male, aged 70, born in village Ivolga, university degree, engineer

- Interactions with following groups of addressees:
  - wife (file 01-02, 20, 24)
  - cat (01-02, 20, 24)
  - shop assistants (03, 17)
  - colleagues (04-09, 11-16)
  - financial administration (10)
  - medical staff (18-19)
  - grandson (22)
  - neighbour (23)

- data include lots of telephone calls
Research questions

• **Survey of nominal forms** used by the recorded persons S-05 and S-35 to address others, and nominal forms used by the other interlocutors to address S-05/S-35

• **Combination of pronominal and nominal forms of address**

• Establish the **degree of variation** when addressing one and the same interlocutor

• Identify **possible reasons** for this kind of variation
I. Nominal forms of address used for different groups of addressees

(\text{blue} = \text{combined with}\ vy, \text{red} = \text{combined with}\ ty), \text{green} = \text{combined with both}\ vy\ \text{and}\ ty):

\textbf{(1) Colleagues:}

\underline{FN + PN}: Sergej Nikolaevich, Ol’ga Aleksandrovna, Svetlana Sergeevna;

\underline{FN (SF)}: Vika / Vik;

\underline{FN (HF)}: Svetulechka;

\text{variable}: Vladimir Valentinovich / Vashe prevosxoditel’stvo
(FN + PN / Title), Vera / Verochka / Verochka Konstantinovna
(FN (FF) / FN (HF), FN (HF) + PN)

- Collective address: deochki moi, devchonki , (my) girls’
S-05 (c‘tued)

(2) STUDENTS:

LN: Avgustinopol‘skij, Golikov, Mironov, Petrov, Makarovskij, Fidichev;

FN + PN: Andrej Olegovich;

FN (FF): Georgij, Rostislav, Artem, Nikita, Igor‘, Pavel, Sergej, Aleksej;

FN (SF): Zhen‘, Dima, Lesha;

variable: Mixail / Misha / Bol‘shakov, Vladislav / Vlad / Makarov (FN (SF) / FN (FF) / LN); others: my dear friend

Collective address: tovarishchi kursanty 'comrades cadets‘, gospoda 'gentlemen‘, rebjata 'guys‘, cuciki 'puppies‘
S-05 (c‘tued)

(3) FRIENDS:
FN (FF): Oksana;
FN (HF): Lidochka

(4) NEIGHBOURS:
FN: Nellja / Nell’ (mother);
FN (SF/HF): Oles‘ / Oles‘ka / devochka (daughter);
FN: Igor‘ (son)
II. Nominal forms used for addressing Elena Anatol’evna herself:

(1) **COLLEAGUES**: FN (HF): Lenochka (1x); FN (SF): Len (2x), Lena (4x); FN (FF): Elen (1x); FN (FF) + PN: Elena Anatol’evna (3x); FN (HF) + PN: Lenochka Anatol’evna (1x)

(2) **STUDENTS**: FN (FF) + PN: Elena Anatol’evna (3x); FN (SF): Len (1x); others: tovarishch prepodavatel’, *comrade teacher* (2x)

(3) **NEIGHBOURS**: FN (SF): Len (2x)
I. Nominal forms of address used for different groups of addressees

(1) *Colleagues*:

- **FN (FF) + PN**: Vera Mixajlovna, Julija Borisovna, Irina Vladimirovna, Marina Sergeevna;
- **FN (SF)**: Katja
- **FN (HF)**: Natasha, Natashen’ka, Pashk
- **Variable**: Jurij Grigor’evich/Jura/Jurka/Kulibin (FN+PN/FN (SF)/FN (HF)/other); Stanislav Borisovich/Stasik (FN+PN/FN (HF)); Viktor Vasil’evich/Vasilich/Vitja (FN+PN/PN/FN (SF)); Aleksandr Aleksandrovich/Sash/dorogoj moj (FN+PN/FN (SF)/other); Ira/krasavica (FN (SF)/other);
- **Others**: brat, *brother*

Collective address: molodye-interesnye, *young-interesting ones*
S-35 (c‘tued)

(2) *FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION STAFF*:

FN + PN: Ol‘ga Anatol‘evna, Tat‘jana Aleksandrovna, Marina Aleksandrovna

(3) *MEDICAL STAFF*:

Variable: Natasha / Natashen‘ka (FN (SF) / FN (HF))

(4) *NEIGHBOURS*:

Mashen‘ka / solnyshko moe (FN (HF) / other); Nadjusja (daughter)
S-35 (c‘tued)

(5) **WIFE:** mam / mama-rasterjasha / Masha-rasterjasha, *mum* / 'mama-scatterbrain' / 'Masha scatterbrain'

(6) **GRANDSON:** Maks / Maksim / Maksimochka (FN (SF) / FN (FF) / FN (HF))

(7) **CAT**:

- **FN (HF):** Dyma, Dymka, Dymochka, Dymulja, Dymulen’ka, Dymulechka, Dymul’ka moja

S-35 (c’tued)

II. Nominal forms used for addressing Vitalij Alekseevich himself

(1) **COLLEAGUES**: FN + PN: Vitalij Alekseevich (2x); PN: Alekseich (2x)

(2) **DOCTOR**: FN + PN: Vitalij Alekseevich

(3) **FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION STAFF**: FN + PN: Vitalij Alekseevich (2x)

(4) **GRANDSON**: KT + FN (SF): djadja Vit’, uncle Vit’
Variation of address I

ordS05-07:

I5: Vladimir Valentinovich, ja vse vremja za.. zaputyvajus‘ / Vadim Valer‘evich / Vladimir Vadimovich / Valerij Vladimirovich
M3: zovite... da / zovite menja prosto Vashe Prevosxoditel‘stvo
I5: xorosho dogovorilis‘ (smex)
M3: prosto i so vkusom
I5: Vashe prevosxoditel‘stvo!

I5: Vladimir Valentinovich, I get confused all the time / Vadim Valer‘evich / Vladimir Vadimovich / Valerij Vladimirovich
M3: Call me .. Well, call me simply Your Excellency
I5: OK, that‘s settled! (laughter)
M3: Simple and with taste
I5: Your Excellency!
Variation of address II

ordS05-09:

I5: xochu obratit' / vsë vashe vnimanie sjuda // uspeete v steny perevesti / Misha! Mixail // ja vam prosto pokazhu // smotrite / po efpiaj (...) my ocenivaem / wysokij urovnen'/ nizkij / ili srednij / po dannoj shkale / nabral ispytuemiyj / i dal'she proizvodim interpretaciju / Bol'shakov!

HM: da?

I5: da vot/ vash vopros / zakluchalsja v sledujushchem....

I5: I want to draw all of your attention on this point (whether) you manage to convert that into columns / Misha! Mixail // I will just show you // look for FPI (...) we rate (whether) the informant has achieved a high / low / or intermediate level on this given scale / and then we will perform an interpretation / Bol'shakov!

– Yes?
– Well / your question was based on the following ....
Variation of address III

ordS35-04:

I35: Privet / Jurij Grigor‘evich!
M1: Dobroe utro
M1: (?)
I35: Nu otkuda ja znal / chto ty zdes‘ nochuesh‘? oj / Jurij Grigor‘evich / Jurij Grigor‘evich / chto zhe eto takoe poluchaetsja to / a?
Zhena doma plachet/ a on ponimaesh‘ li / na rabote/ propadaet // oj / Jurij Grigor‘evich/ Jurij Grigor‘evich! chto zhe eto takoe to / a?


(...) ty chto delaesh‘ s cvetkom / Jura?

(...) Jurij Grigor‘evich/ vy menja dostali //
Variation of address III

ordS35-04:

I35: Hello / Jurij Grigor‘evich!
M1: Good morning
I35: What’s up with you? You didn’t spend the night here, did you? // o my boy//
M1: (?)
I35: But how could I know that you spend the nights here? O / Jurij Grigor‘evich / Jurij Grigor‘evich / what is happening here? The wife cries at home and he, you know, gets lost at work// o/ Jurij Grigor‘evich/ Jurij Grigor‘evich! What does that mean?

(...) o / Jurij Grigor‘evich/ Jurij Grigor‘evich! // did you again crash the telephone? // you are always preparing for something/ Kulibin! // Kulibin / Kulibin/ what are you preparing?

(...) what do you do with the flower/ Jura?

(...) Jurij Grigor‘evich/ I am fed up with you//
Conclusions

- Data from ORD attest high degree of instability with regard to selection of forms in order to address the same interlocutor.

“The number of different ways in which a person can be referred to are virtually infinite. It would be ridiculous to attempt to decide how a given person is ‘normally’ referred to, just as it would be pointless to try to find the ‘normal’ way in which that person is addressed. Both address and reference vary according to the speaker’s relationship to the addressee or person referred to.” (Dickey 1997, 259)
Conclusions

- variation with regard to pronominal address
- variation with regard to combination of pronominal and nominal address forms (cf. combination of first name + patronymic type of address with familiar as well as distant pronominal address forms)
- variation in nominal address forms *not* restricted to address patterns that serve the same pragmatic domain (e.g. different types of first name forms for familiar address), but includes patterns from different ends of the „solidarity“ scale (e.g. hypocoristic first names vs. distant first name + patronymic)
Conclusions

- Data from ORD attest a **wide variety** of nominal address forms, among them forms that are not mentioned in surveys on address in Russian (e.g. FN (HF) + PN).

  - in general, forms that were identified as central components of Russian address system indeed form the bulk of forms attested in our data, but they can be rather freely combined.

- Importance of **asymmetric address** in Russian can be confirmed.

  - non-reciprocal use of pronominal as well as nominal address forms frequently occurs in the data (not only in institutional settings!)

- Importance of **repeating of address forms** during conversation (inclusion of addressee into sphere of the speaker).
Conclusions

- Variability of address patterns on the nominal as well as on the pronominal level offers possibilities for expressing very fine-graded shades of (temporary) social and personal distance between interlocutors

  - playfulness/irony
  - impact of personal mood
  - impact of topic/purpose of exchange and setting of conversation (private/official)
  - impact of discourse on relationship (e.g. alienation, change or manipulation of distance between interlocutors)
  - personal style (see S-35!)

Russian address seems to be governed much more by pragmatic considerations of the speaker than is commonly assumed, not just encoding of (presumably rather stable and predictable) social semantic properties
The end.....

Thank you for your attention!

Благодарю за внимание!
Здравствуйте Ольга Александровна еще раз! так / какой компьютер с принтером? вот этот слушайте / я прям не могу / что там с этим семинаром / там какие-то нарушения *В движения и речи //

Я сейчас тебе покажу [...] 

* С а они приехали всего в восемь вечера только из Кронштадта они при.. их привезли / представляете?

расскажи что там было с-с-с // этой.. [...] 

ну / я думаю что она забыла уже обо всем этом // слушайте / там к нам Кунцина на кафедру просится / представляешь Ольга Александровна