

How Do WE Address the Instructors in the Expanding Circle? Perspectives from Turkish EFL Speakers

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(Received 7 October 2023; Accepted 20 May 2024)

ABSTRACT: This paper explores the linguistic forms preferred by Turkish speakers of English to address instructors in academic settings. Far from the norm-referenced approach which focuses on labeling non-native-like practices as failures, this study casts light on the underlying mechanisms of the identified address preferences from a variationist point of view. To this end, 140 Turkish speakers of English as a foreign language reported the address forms they preferred on a discourse completion task. Next, ten participants were semi-structurally interviewed to reveal the motives behind their preferences. The results yielded that Turkish language and culture were mirrored on L2 English address practices through code-switching and translating. Along with the finding that the participants repudiated the address norms of the Inner Circle varieties of English, it was discussed that this can be a sign of a developing system of addressing in Turkish English as a variety in the Expanding Circle.

Keywords: address forms, Turkish English, World Englishes

Geniřleyen Daire’de Öğretim Elemanlarına Hitap Biçimleri Üzerine: Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce Konuşan Türk Bireylerin Görüşleri

ÖZ: Bu çalışma, İngilizce konuşan Türk bireylerin İngilizce sözlü ve yazılı etkileşim sırasında öğretim elemanlarına yönelik kullandıkları hitap biçimlerini arařtırmaktadır. İç Daire’de kullanılan İngilizceden farklı olan kullanımları hata olarak nitelendiren ölçün temelli yaklaşımdan uzak bir biçimde, bu çalışma aynı zamanda belirlenen hitap tercihlerinin altında yatan sebepleri deęişkeci bir bakış açısıyla ele almaktadır. Bu doğrultuda, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce konuşan 140 Türk birey bir söylem tamamlama testi aracılığıyla verilen sözlü ve yazılı senaryolarda tercih ettikleri hitap biçimlerini bildirmişlerdir. Bu tercihlerin arkasındaki savları açığa çıkarmak amacıyla 10 katılımcı ile yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Sonuç olarak, katılımcıların hitap biçimlerini çoğunlukla dil deęiřtirme ve çeviri yöntemlerine başvurarak Türkçe ve Türk kültürü etkisi altında kullandıkları ortaya çıkmıştır. Katılımcıların hitap biçimlerini İç Daire’deki İngilizce konuşanlarla aynı düzlemde kullanmayı tercih etmedikleri bulgusu ışığında, bu tercihlerin Geniřleyen Daire’nin bir deęişkesi olarak Türk İngilizcesinde gelişen hitap sisteminin bir işaretcisi olabileceęi tartışılmıştır.

Anahtar sözcükler: hitap biçimleri, Türk İngilizcesi, Dünya İngilizceleri

1 Introduction

Certain communities commence embracing a more informal style of language which puts less emphasis on the vertical and horizontal distance dimensions between the interlocutors, while people in some other areas sustain the value of such scales in their mindsets and manifest these paradigms in their language register and style while communicating. As reminiscent of the effect of culture on language, English scholar Leech (2014) reveals one of his experiences where he was addressed by his first name (FN) by a health insurance agent during his first visit to the United States in 1964. He states that he was surprised to receive such a familiar address form by a person whom he met for the first time since this ‘modern’ habit of FN address was not prevalent in the United Kingdom at that time. Although these two parties in this anecdote originally shared the same language, English, it showed variances in use because it was spoken in different areas and by people with different cultural backgrounds. While this example demonstrates a sociolinguistic variety that is highly accustomed in relevant linguistic research, it has come to be acknowledged that many other types of variances are evident in English spoken in different parts of the world where English is somewhat involved. Kachru (1986) depicts these parts of the world in concentric circles as Inner Circle, where English is natively spoken, the Outer

Circle, where English is spoken as a second language or has an official status, and Expanding Circle, where English is learned and used as a foreign language. Along with this model which was based on the ranking of English in different countries, research documented that the English spoken in these areas varies in many aspects, including semantic, lexical, pragmatic, and sociolinguistic matters. Consequently, it has been more apparent that there is not one type of English. Instead, there are many types of English all around the globe which are different from what is perceived as standard English, which led to the emergence of the concept of World Englishes (WEs) along with a whole new window to the field.

It is historic to witness the way perspectives change along with the rise of WEs and new approaches emerge free from the norm-referenced view of English, some of which made their way even into the English language teaching field and materials. Lindqvist and Soler (2022), for instance, revealed that English language teaching textbooks in Sweden presented grammatical constructions which would traditionally be refrained from teaching since they are marked as ill-formed in standard English. In such a context where English is spreading all over the world and finding itself in many different variations from both structural and social aspects, at the same time being welcomed by the current understanding, what makes Leech (2014) surprised in the above-mentioned incident seems like a drop in the bucket. The reason is that address behavior is highly sensitive to cultural backgrounds and the perceptions of social relations in a particular community, even within the same language which is spoken in different regions (Formentelli & Hajek, 2016). Within this framework, one may expect speakers in each concentric circle to alternate their address practices based on their cultural schemata while speaking English. Accordingly, this current understanding of WEs leads us to the idea that labeling some L2 English address practices as ‘sociopragmatic failure’ (Mendes de Oliveira, 2017) should be revisited.

It is critical today to understand the dynamics of certain language practices in the Expanding Circle, laying aside the conventional act of predicating these practices on a medley of failures. However, it has been repeatedly underlined that studies on English in the Expanding Circle countries have been relatively limited within the WEs literature (Arik, 2020), particularly in terms of addressing. Therefore, this study aims to contribute to the Expanding Circle research by investigating the address forms preferred by Turkish speakers of English as a foreign language (EFL) with a focus on addressing instructors in academic settings and it aims to cast light on the mechanisms underlying these preferences. Finally, it aims to speculate on the address practices developing in what can be called ‘Turkish English’.

2 The Alchemy of Addressing in Academia

After decades in which address research proliferated with emerging studies focusing on various parameters in different settings, the fact remains that the address forms in educational contexts have been paid considerable attention, as several books written as a prescriptive guide to address practices generally include chapters on addressing in academia. For instance, Hickey (2013) noted that professors, assistant professors, and associate professors should be addressed as ‘Professor and name’ in conversation or salutation, and instructors with a doctorate degree should be addressed as ‘Dr. and name’, while the ones without it should be addressed as ‘Mr./Ms. and name’ in the section dedicated to addressing academics. Similarly, Holberg (1994) also stated that professors should be addressed as either ‘Professor’ or ‘Dr. and name’. Similar statements can be traced back in other studies (e.g., Webster, 1988; Dunkling, 1990).

Besides these prescriptive writings on addressing, there is a body of descriptive research whose findings are not in line with what guidance books conventionally dictated, highlighting the complexity and dynamic process of addressing behavior in academic settings. While formal forms of address such as titles or honorifics are foreseen to address the faculty members, descriptive investigations revealed results out of this tune. To illustrate, Wright (2009) drew attention to the informalization of the address forms in American English and its reflections in academia. The study yielded that the students’ choice of address forms depended on several factors, such as the mode of communication, familiarity, and the instructor’s personality. While most of the participants preferred addressing the teaching staff as formal forms of address like ‘Professor’, a minor group preferred FNs if the instructor had a friendly personality. In addition, most of the students reported that they had addressed their lecturers as their FNs at some point in their lives. On the other hand, Formentelli (2009), who attempted to identify the factors affecting the address practices in a British academic setting, found out that students generally addressed their lecturers by formal forms of address such as titles or honorifics. As for the instructors with whom students were in more frequent contact, they tended to call them by their FNs, while few students addressed them as formal address forms.

Some other research found evidence that the address forms that students use are dependent on the position of the student in the hierarchy. Dickey (1997) found that although addressing lecturers as Title + LNs (last names) was seen as more appropriate, graduate students were more likely to address them as their FNs. Similarly, Burt (2015) found out that graduate students were welcomed to address lecturers as their FNs, while undergraduate students were more likely to use academic or generic titles. In fact, besides universities where FN addresses towards the faculty members are becoming somewhat common, Clyne, Norrby,

and Warren (2009) found that students at lower-level English schools also addressed their teachers by their FNs.

From a variationist point of view, Formentelli and Hajek (2016) examined the address forms used in American, British, and Australian educational settings. The researchers found out that Australian English is the most informal one in that informal forms of addressing were the most common among the investigated varieties. British English employed varied practices, and there was a shift in the address forms as the students created a rapport with the faculty members. American English, on the other hand, was found to be the most formal one. As opposed to what earlier research suggested, formal forms of address were found to be the most common ones in American English. The researchers argued that culture is one of the essential factors in address behavior even when the same language is spoken.

The effect of culture on addressing becomes clearer in the findings suggested by Formentelli (2018), who explored the address patterns in an Italian university where English was chosen as a medium of instruction and communication. The study context included students from various European and non-European areas, and they used English for academic and social purposes in the university. The findings of the study suggested that the students generally preferred formal forms to address their lecturers. Furthermore, some students reported that they were uncomfortable addressing their lecturers by their FNs, even if they were allowed to practice this. Formentelli (2018) argued that some students were not comfortable using FNs because of their South Asian, Middle Eastern, and African cultural backgrounds, which entailed a strict command of vertical relations. Therefore, it can be deduced that cultural background is an important factor affecting language style even while speaking a foreign language in another country.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to assert that one's own cultural schema plays little role in foreign language address practices when it is considered that each culture has its unique system of addressing, which may be perplexing for foreigners, such as the common practice of addressing lecturers as kinship terms such as 'daddy' in Cameroon academia (Ubanako, 2021). It is possible to assume that each culture differs in such practices, and their native language and cultural norms might influence foreign language learners and speakers (Ronowicz, 1992). While using the address forms under the influence of L1 norms was regarded as sociopragmatic failure (Mendes de Oliveira, 2017) or fell under the realm of pragmatic failure since it generally includes negative transfer (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010), today, the need for a new perspective which aims to understand the motivation behind these 'failures', or varieties within the concept of WEs, is crystallizing. It has been documented that the address forms in academic settings have been going under changes and showing variances in different varieties of English, even in the Inner Circle. In such a context where English is used as a

Lingua Franca, it is more than possible to see more variations in the address system of English in line with the questions ‘by whom’ and ‘where’ it is being spoken.

3 Method

3.1 Research Design

This mixed-method study utilizes the assets of both quantitative and qualitative research design; thus, it aims to provide numerical findings followed by descriptive insights into the numerical data. The quantitative facet of the study was maintained by the discourse completion task (DCT) designed by the researchers of the study. On the other hand, the qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews. Overall, the study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What forms do the Turkish speakers of English prefer to address the instructors?
2. What are the arguments behind the address forms preferred by the participants?

These research questions are critical in several terms. The first research question aims to depict a general picture of the tendencies of addressing in L2 English used by Turkish speakers. By means of this research question, it becomes clear to what extent Turkish speakers of L2 English internalize the norms of the target language or in what ways they manipulate them. Such an investigation can give us the chance to observe the strategies used by Turkish speakers of L2 English, including code-mixing, code-switching, and translating. The second research question, on the other hand, can cast light on the question whether these preferred practices are a result of incompetency or a deliberate action leaning on cultural matters. The data collected by the second research question play a critical role while interpreting a developing system of addressing in Turkish English.

3.2 Participants

The study was conducted with the participation of 140 preparatory class university students at a state university in Turkey who were instructed by a group of instructors with a master’s degree. While selecting the participant groups, convenience sampling method was utilized. All the participants were learners of English with different proficiency levels classified by the institution, including 22 speakers of A1, 12 speakers of A2, and 106 speakers of B1 level of English. The departments of these students were English language teaching (59 students

at B1 level), English language and literature (47 students at B1 level), nano-technology engineering (12 students at A2 level), computer engineering (10 students at A1 level), economics (8 students at A1 level), and logistics (4 students at A1 level). Because the study attempts to disclose the address practices by Turkish learners of English and speculates about native language and culture effect on this practice, only the learners who spoke Turkish natively were included in the study. None of the participants had lived abroad before, and they reported they did not frequently communicate with a foreigner or native speaker of English. All of them had been learning English since fourth grade.

3.3 Data Collection and Data Analysis

The data collection procedure entailed two stages. Firstly, 140 participants were asked to report what address forms they preferred to use to address the instructors on a DCT. The DCT instrument included two simple scenarios for both oral and written interaction with the instructor. This instrument was designed by the researchers by double-checking to ensure that the scenarios reflected the aim of the data collection while keeping it smooth as much as possible. The oral scenario included the statement [You are in the classroom and you are listening to the lecture. During the lecture, you want to ask the teacher a question. You raise your hand and you say “_____, can I ask a question?” Which address form do you use to call the teacher?], while the written one entailed the situation [You are writing an email to the teacher in English to submit your paper. Firstly, you greet her/him by writing “Hello, _____”. Which address form do you use to greet the teacher?]. These two scenarios were settled because they are two of the situations where learners frequently address their instructors in real-life settings. The instrument was distributed to the participants digitally through Google Forms, and the participants were reminded that they were supposed to state the address form they would use, rather than the one which appeared to be ideal. After the data were collected, the frequencies of the responses were counted and presented in cross tables.

Following the data collection process through DCTs, ten participants were interviewed semi-structurally to cast light on the mechanisms underlying their preferences because “semi-structured interviews are strictly qualitative and provide more opportunities for reflection” (Rose, McKinley, & Baffoe-Djan, 2020, p. 116). The participants who were interviewed were selected randomly from the entire population, resulting in the selection of five B1 learners (Sevim, Derya, Irmak, Zehra, and Kaya), four A2 learners (Sevgi, Ahsen, Emre, and Mert), and one A1 learner (Okan) (all pseudonyms). Proficiency levels were not held as variables in the study; however, it is still important to note them to show that the data come from a heterogeneous group. The interview process was carried out individually through telephone conversations. The interview

questions entailed items referring to the participant's preferences for addressing their instructors and the reasons behind this preference like 'What form of address did you report for the first scenario?', 'Why do you think you use this address form?', 'Do you think you would address the instructors by their FNs like native English speakers can do? Why or why not?', along with several follow-up questions based on the participants' responses.

The interview process was conducted on the basis of stimulated recall (Mackey & Gass, 2013) in that participants were asked to reflect upon the previously collected data, and they were asked to state the reasons behind their preferences for the address forms on the DCT. All the DCT data were collected in two days, and the interviews were conducted on the third day following the completion of the DCT data collection. By this short duration between the DCTs and the interviews, the risk of inaccuracy for the stimulated recalling during the interviews was kept at minimum. The interview sessions were recorded and transcribed. This was followed by the analyzing process, where the transcriptions were coded and categorized in line with the recurring themes and related concepts. The results of the analyzed data were tabulated for a clearer perspective. While discussing the interview results, a pseudonym for each participant was used.

4 Findings and Discussion

4.1 Identifying Preferences

The address forms reported by the participants are various, though there seems to be an accumulation in favor of certain address forms in both oral and written discourse. In the first scenario, where the participants were asked to report the address form they preferred in an oral interaction in the classroom, a considerable number of participants stated to prefer 'hocam' to address the instructors while speaking English. This is followed by 'teacher', which was reported nearly half as frequently as 'hocam'. The other address forms, though reported relatively less in quantity, include 'Sir/Madam', 'Professor', 'Mr./Ms. + LN', 'my teacher,' and 'teacherim.' As the data reveal, none of the participants reported FNs to address the instructors. As for the written discourse, a scenario in which the participants were asked to report the address form they prefer while writing an email to the instructors, the most reported address form is 'teacher.' This address form is followed by 'Mr./Ms. + LN,' 'hocam,' 'Sir/Madam,' 'Professor,' and 'my teacher.' Similarly, FNs are not reported as an address form to be used in emails. Table 1 explicates the seven different address forms collected from the DCTs.

Table 1. Distribution of the address forms across oral and written discourse

Address Forms	In Classroom		In Email	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Hocam	83	59.3	16	11.4
Mr./Ms. + LN	2	1.4	32	22.9
My teacher	1	0.7	1	0.7
Professor	2	1.4	10	7.1
Sir/Madam	6	4.3	11	7.9
Teacher	45	32.1	70	50
Teacherım	1	0.7	0	0
Total	140	100	140	100

It can be argued that Turkish speakers of English generally use the address forms in line with their native language norms by code-switching. The most reported address form in oral discourse, ‘hocam’, is a term that is frequently used to address educational entities in Turkey. Furthermore, this address form is not only used by students to address their teachers but also it is frequently used by educational entities to address their colleagues. That is, in Turkey, ‘hocam’ is a very common expression to address any type of educator, academician, teacher, and so forth. It is constructed by /hoca/ [teacher] + /m/ [my] in that it involves a possessive morpheme, leading to a meaning similar to ‘my teacher.’ In Turkish, as is the case with ‘hocam’, it is very common to use address forms in possessive forms to reflect intimate emotions. In line with this, ‘hocam’ expresses both respect and sincerity in the Turkish language (Ataman, 2018). The word ‘hoca’ is from Persian (Avadallah & Uylaş, 2010), originally describing religious officials. However, it has gained a new meaning similar to that of ‘teacher’ after it became a part of the Turkish language. According to Özcan (2016), the term ‘hocam’ was popularized by the 1968 generation, who believed in addressing everyone as ‘hocam’ to signify that everyone has something valuable to teach others.

The dominant choice of ‘hocam’ is followed by ‘teacher’, which is an occupational title in English. It can be deduced that Turkish speakers of English transfer their native language habits to English, as in Turkish, the teachers are addressed by their occupational titles. This finding is similar to what Mendes de Oliveira (2017) found with Brazilian speakers of English who translated their Portuguese address system to English. Furthermore, this transfer goes further with a verbatim translation of the Turkish address system with the addition of a possessive case, which leads to the form ‘my teacher,’ which is also present in the data. Besides, a made-up word of mixed morphemes is also present in the data as ‘teacherım,’ which is constructed by code-mixing with the English word [teacher] and Turkish possessive suffix [m].

On the other hand, very few participants reported using the address forms in line with the regularities of the Inner Circle varieties of English. That is, it is a fact that the Inner Circle speakers of English generally address the educational entities as Mr./Mrs. + LN, and in case of a special relationship, FNs can be used (Clyne et al., 2009), and ‘Professor’ can be used as well to address academics (Hickey, 2013), while honorifics like ‘Sir/Madam’ are also used in many contexts, as well as in educational contexts. Therefore, it can be deduced that most Turkish EFL learners are not interested in following the address practices common in the Inner Circle varieties while communicating orally. Instead, they create their own style of addressing by mostly code-switching and translating the word ‘hocam’ as ‘teacher’, excluding the possessive marker.

In written discourse, the picture slightly changes. Clearly, the participants considered their style and were more aware that they were to speak English. The dominant choice of address in the email scenario entails ‘teacher’ and ‘Mr./Ms. + LN’ address forms, while the use of ‘hocam’ decreases dramatically when compared to the oral scenario. One may be forgiven to hypothesize that the participants paid attention to being more formal while writing an email since many of them reported generic titles (Mr./Mrs.), and most of them reported ‘teacher’ instead of ‘hocam’. This finding highlights that Turkish EFL learners use the language in different styles in oral and written communication, leading us to the question of what reasons underlie these preferences.

4.2 Establishing Arguments

Findings elicited from the interview sessions reveal that six of the participants stated they preferred to address the instructors as ‘hocam’, three of them preferred ‘teacher’, and one of them preferred ‘Sir/Madam’ in oral discourse. The arguments stated by the participants accumulate around several themes, including sincerity, respect, habits, Turkish culture effect, informality, and native-like idealization. These findings can be summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Arguments behind the address preferences in oral discourse

Participants (Pseudonyms)	Address Form	Arguments
Sevim Irmak Sevgi Emre Ahsen Mert	Hocam	Sincerity Respect Habits

Derya Zehra Okan	Teacher	Turkish culture Informality Habits
Kaya	Sir/Madam	Native-like idealization

Those who preferred ‘hocam’ to address the instructors stated that this address form expresses sincerity and respect at the same time, in line with what Ataman (2018) noted. Additionally, native language habits seem to play critical roles in this practice. Many participants stated that they preferred the address form ‘hocam’ to address the instructors while speaking English, among whom Irmak contended the following (1):

- (1) Irmak: “I prefer to say hocam in class because it feels more comfortable and sincere, and it sounds respectful to me... using Mr. and surname on email is OK but not while speaking... it is awkward and disrespectful.”

It can be deduced from Irmak’s transcription (1) that she would like to feel comfortable while speaking English, and this comfort is provided to her by her native language norms. She stated that using Inner Circle native-English norms to address educational entities as ‘Mr./Ms. + LN’ may be acceptable while writing an email, but she feels it is awkward and disrespectful in oral interaction. This can be related to what Ishihara and Cohen (2010) categorized as resistance to using perceived L2 pragmatic norms under pragmatic failure. That is, some speakers of foreign languages keep traces of their cultural backgrounds instead of accepting the target language norms. This is not because they are not aware of the system of the target language, but they do not wish to internalize it. In this vein, it can be argued that Turkish EFL learners may be aware of the address system in the English language; however, they may prefer to transfer their native language norms to English due to affective domains. Indeed, showing intimacy through address forms is a typical behavior in Turkish culture even towards some strangers on the street (Kökpınar Kaya, 2012). In this context, it is not surprising that learners prefer to show their respect and sincerity at the same time towards their instructors. Instead of labeling this practice as a pragmatic failure from a conventional point of view, it can be argued that this practice may be accepted as a variety of Turkish English in the context of WEs.

In fact, Irmak is not the only participant who reflected these points on addressing instructors as ‘hocam’ while speaking English. Among others, Ahsen also underscored the theme of sincerity of the address form ‘hocam’ as in (2).

- (2) Ahsen: “I generally use hocam to address them in the classroom. Because it is more intimate and sincere. I feel I express my attitude better when I address the teachers like this.”

What Ahsen highlighted as reflecting the attitude is an important function of addressing. Individuals convey their emotions and attitudes through several linguistic tools, among which address forms are prominent markers of this act. Ahsen stated that she expresses herself and her attitude better when she uses ‘hocam’ instead of any other address form while speaking English. This may be because this address form includes a possessive marker which is an important indicator of respect and sincerity in Turkish language, while this is not the case in the English address system. On the other hand, the concept of habit is another argument that was frequently mentioned while discussing the practice of addressing the instructors as ‘hocam’. For instance, Emre stated that he generally tries to address the instructors as ‘teacher’, but he ends up calling them ‘hocam’ because of his habits.

Besides ‘hocam’, the data reveal an overwhelming result in favor of the word ‘teacher’ to be used as a form to address the instructors. Typically, teachers’ occupational titles are not used as an address form in English to address the faculty members. However, this is a very common practice in Turkey and Turkish culture. It seems that Turkish EFL learners translate what they say in Turkish to English to address the instructors, excluding the possessive marker. According to Ishihara and Cohen (2010), this would be labeled as pragmatic failure since the speakers perform negative transfer. However, as the interview data reveal, this can be regarded as an acceptable variety since many speakers are actually aware that this is not an Inner Circle native-English phenomenon. Nevertheless, the participants stated to prefer that. Okan stated his perspective as in (3), which is related to his habits stemming from his native language:

- (3) Okan: “For example, if I want to ask a question I say [Teacher, can I ask a question?]. Other things are not common in Turkey like sir or madam... We always say hocam in Turkish, so I say it in English as ‘teacher’.”

Along with habits, Derya drew attention to the cultural influence while speaking English. She stated that she would choose the best address form which she thinks is appropriate to Turkish cultural norms and she avoids what makes her feel awkward, such as the use of other address forms which are the norms of the target culture, as she stated (4):

- (4) Derya: “I prefer to call them teacher in the classroom because I think it is more suitable for Turkish and our culture... Also, when I say sir or madam it sounds too formal and I feel awkward because I am not used to saying it.”

On the other hand, some participants mentioned the concept of informality as an argument for using ‘teacher’ to address the instructors. For instance, Zehra stated that classroom discourse does not have to be as formal as other contexts such as emails (5). Therefore, she does not mind calling the instructors simply ‘teacher’ while speaking.

- (5) Zehra: “While speaking in the class, I would rather use teacher address form to greet the instructor because even though we speak formal in the class, it is not formal as much as writing an email or an essay.”

Although most of the participants preferred a unique system of addressing which shows the characteristics of both Turkish and English, some of the participants stated to prefer what can be called as an Inner Circle English norm. One of them was Kaya, who preferred ‘Sir/Madam’ address form to address the instructors. Kaya stated that he wants to be like a native speaker because he is going to be an English teacher in the future as in (6). He stated that he used to call his teachers and instructors ‘hocam’ or ‘teacher’ in the past. However, after he learned that this is not practiced by native English speakers, he started to use ‘Sir/Madam’. This finding indicates that learners’ prospective jobs or current majors may play key roles in their address preferences in English.

- (6) Kaya: “I would prefer to address my teachers as sir or madam anywhere because I am going to be an English teacher and I want to sound like a native as much as possible. I am going to teach this language to other people... So I need to be accurate as much as possible. In the past, I used to call my teachers hocam but after I learned that in English they call them sir or madam I started to call them like this.”

While the address forms were found to be highly sensitive to the learners’ native language and culture in oral communication, this picture changed to a certain extent in written discourse. Although ‘Mr./Ms. + LN’ forms are not typically used in Turkish written discourse, many participants reported to prefer ‘teacher’ and ‘Mr./Ms. + LN’ in an email they would write to the instructor. There seems to be a difference between oral and written discourse, as fewer participants reported to prefer ‘hocam’ in English written interaction when compared to the oral one. The motivation behind their preferences for the address forms in email interactions falls under three main themes: concern about formality, native-like idealization, and habits. These findings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Arguments behind the address preferences in written discourse

Participants (pseudonyms)	Address Form	Arguments
Sevim Irmak Sevgi Zehra Emre Okan	Mr./Ms. + LN	Formality
Derya	Professor	Formality
Ahsen	Teacher	Formality
Kaya	Sir/Madam	Native-like idealization
Mert	Hocam	Habits

The reason why most of the participants reported to prefer ‘Mr./Ms. + LN’, ‘Professor’, and ‘teacher’ address forms in email interaction is because they considered emails as formal events. Interestingly, these participants showed different perceptions of formality regarding the address forms, as some of them thought ‘Mr./Ms. + LN’ is formal, while others thought ‘Professor’ and ‘teacher’ are formal. What is common in all of their thinking style is that emails should contain formal style, and this should be manifested in address forms. In line with this view, Lasan (2021) revealed that EFL speakers pay more attention to address forms than native speakers when evaluating the formality of a given text. The different perceptions of formality can be traced in what Derya stated (7):

- (7) Derya: “I prefer to say professor when writing an email. I think this is more appropriate since emails need to be formal. Although it is formal when writing an email, I do not say sir or madam because I think it sounds extremely strange especially after saying ‘dear’.”

Derya considered the address form ‘Professor’ as appropriate since it is formal; however, she considered other formal forms of address, such as ‘Sir/Madam,’ as strange to use. Apart from those who stated formality as an argument to their address preferences in written interaction, Kaya and Mert stated different grounds. More precisely, Mert stated a similar ground to that of oral interaction in that he prefers using ‘hocam’ because he is used to saying that. On the other hand, Kaya sustained his willingness to be like a native speaker in writing emails as well, and he prefers using ‘Sir/Madam’ while writing an email to the instructors.

Although some Turkish EFL learners like Kaya had the desire to be like a native speaker, it seems that they become restricted to some extent. When the

participants were asked if they would like to address the instructors by their FNs like native speakers of English in the Inner Circle may do, all of them stated that they would never do that because it is disrespectful. This interesting finding even came up with Kaya who would like to sound like a native speaker as much as possible. Although he wanted to sound like a native speaker as much as possible, he did not accept the idea of addressing the instructors by their FNs since it is disrespectful as he stated (8):

- (8) Kaya: “I may say Mr. and surname, but I cannot say their names directly. Maybe this is normal in other cultures but in our culture, we should be respectful to our teachers. Calling them directly by their names is disrespectful to me. I can’t do it.”

Besides Kaya, all the other participants also stated that they would never address the instructors by their FNs in whatever language they speak because they perceive such a practice as extremely disrespectful.

5 Conclusion

Laying aside the traditional view which regards L2 English speakers’ non-native-like practices as failures, this study approached the address phenomenon in L2 English contexts from a variationist perspective which gained attraction along with the rise of WEs. With this aim in mind, we attempted to identify what forms the Turkish speakers of English prefer to address the instructors in academic settings in both oral and written interaction, followed by the attempts to understand the reasons behind their preferences. The results revealed that most of the participants preferred addressing the instructors as the Turkish word ‘hocam’ in oral English interaction, while they mostly preferred ‘teacher’ in written interaction. While ‘hocam’ is a Turkish word and it is reported to be used by code-switching, ‘teacher’ is a translation of this word excluding the possessive marker. It was revealed that the reason behind the overwhelming preference of ‘hocam’ is related to habits, cultural and affective perceptions, as the participants stated that they feel more sincere and respectful to the teacher when they use this address form, while they see the translation of this word as appropriate in written English interaction.

Apparently, cultural norms have great impacts on speakers’ address practices in English. Additionally, it was also revealed that learners’ prospective jobs may affect their preferences for address forms, as one participant whose major was English language teaching stated that he uses the address forms in line with the Inner Circle native-English norms. Turkish speakers of English prefer addressing the instructors in a way that they are accustomed to in their own culture and language, even when they are aware of the native-like practices. Thus, it can be argued that the address forms are one of the most prominent markers of Turkish English since it shows considerable deviations from what is regarded as a native

variety of English. Within the current understanding of WEs, the practices by Turkish EFL learners and speakers can be regarded as the characteristics of Turkish English. As researchers from this area, the way WE address educational entities in Turkey has its roots in the system of addressing in Turkish, which helps us to realize interpersonal relationships rather than just the act of addressing; therefore, it is important for us to use the words which sustain this implicit purpose. While this case seems valid for Turkish EFL learners with address practices, it is in prospect that further studies on different groups of English users will provide more insights into the development and aid the formulization of other varieties of English in terms of addressing.

Limitations

The data collection procedure in this study included a DCT as the instrument. Along with this data elicitation technique, naturally occurring language samples could enrich the set of data for the purpose harbored in this study. In this context, future research is suggested to incorporate naturally occurring data to its data collection method for more substantial findings.

Author Contributions: This research and all stages related to the research were conducted by two authors with equal contribution.

Submission statement and verification: This study has not been previously published elsewhere. It is not under review in another journal. Publication of the study has been approved, either implicitly or explicitly, by all authors and the responsible authorities at the university/research center where the study was conducted. If the study is accepted for publication, it will not be published in the same form in another printed or electronic medium in Turkish or any other language without the written permission of the Journal of Linguistic Research.

Conflict of Interest Statement: The authors declare that there are no financial or academic conflicts of interest between themselves or with other institutions, organizations or individuals that may affect this study.

Data Use: The authors collected the data for this study by the administration of discourse completion tasks and interview sessions with English preparatory class students. The data collection procedure was carried out in line with ethical principles. The subjects were informed, and they were given the option to discontinue the participation any time.

Ethical Approval/Participant Consent: The ethical approval for this study was obtained from Ondokuz Mayıs University Ethics Committee which was dated 30/12/2022 and numbered 2022-1105.

Financial Support: No financial support was received for the study.

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