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WORKSHOP

LANGUAGE USE AND HIERARCHY: A DYADIC ANALYSIS OF ADDRESS IN WORKPLACE GROUPS*

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Abstract: The system of address (e.g., *Hello, Joey!; Good morning, Dr Smith!*) is a relational phenomenon: unlike most other sociolinguistic variables, address forms do not, in the first place, give out information about the speaker, but rather the negotiated "sameness" or "difference" of the interlocutors. As the dyad's choice between them is influenced by the group-specific order of value attached to human attributes, the binary basis of the system of address (appearing in Hungarian on verbs: being on *tu*-terms vs. *vos*) makes it possible to quantify the value order of these attributes, as measured by sociological and other variables. This paper classifies norms of address thus emerging, mainly in relation to the interactional orientation in the three studied groups to power and hierarchical structuring.

Keywords: sociolinguistics, the system of address, organisational hierarchy, dyadic analysis

INTRODUCTION

If we look at task-oriented small groups surrounding us, we can see mostly hierarchically organised ones. Is this frequency accidental, or is hierarchical organisation a truly universal structural pattern of human communities? I have been engaged in long-term research attempting to answer the question of *why.* Here, with the help of certain features of verbal interaction, I will be studying to what extent formal or informal hierarchical arrangement is a central, organising value in a group,

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i.e., to what degree a group is *status-oriented.* As all organisations (including hierarchical ones) operate on (mostly verbal) interaction, they presumably become more or less stable via language use.

The study is based on the assumption that one non-negligible aim of human communication is to arrange interlocutors into status groups,[1] partly through negotiation. My sociolinguistic investigations try to reveal whether, and if so, how phenomena of everyday verbal interaction contribute to hierarchical organisation. Among these the system of address will be examined here.

Hierarchy is constituted in interaction

The arrangement of informal hierarchies is mostly constituted via communication, which indirectly influences the arrangement of formal hierarchies, as well. Group members continuously, day by day, minute by minute, communicate their respective status in hierarchies on several, verbal and non-verbal, levels. For example, on non-verbal levels the arrangement of office space, interpersonal space, the angle of facing, movements, communicative availability, clothing or eye-contact all add to the status definition of the individual. Verbal tools are less (self-)definitive, but rather interactive, where levels are theoretically more open to negotiation between interlocutors to decide their relative statuses. These verbal tools include speech act features (agreement, verbal challenge, verbal conflict), temporal and other conversation analytic features of conversation (length of turn, turn-taking, overlap, the right to interrupt, hesitation, turn-allocation) and address.

Of the levels of verbal interaction most often exploited to communicate status relationships I study the system of address in three workplace hierarchies.

The system of address

The *system of address* embraces every form where reference made to the addressee(s) or to the interlocutors' relationship is variable (morphologically, syntactically and/or lexically, thus in verbal and nominal affixes, in nominal and pronominal address, in the choice among synonyms, in greetings, etc.), though languages may exploit diverse forms to express this, minimally binary, function. In some languages the system of address is less exploited, or has weakened (e.g., Swedish or Chinese[2]), or fewer linguistic devices are used to code status relationships

1 *Status* is defined here very generally as the value of a given position in any (formal or informal) hierarchy. Statuses are always dyadically perceived, relative to another person, i.e., Ego compares him/herself to Alter. *Informal hierarchies* (present within and out of organizations) are structures of status differences on one of several attributes – the value system of a community defines the importance of these attributes relative to one another by way of the community's members, though not with the same strength, assigning values to those attributes in the course of their interactions. For example, health, wealth, wisdom, beauty, physical build, taste, expertise, "connections", authority, membership in an ethnic, religious or occupational group, or, for that matter, the ability to cook, to drive, or the size of the collection of Pokémon memorabilia, etc. can each define an informal hierarchy.

between addresser and addressee (e.g., in modern English only nominal address, and to some extent greetings, are variable from this respect). Other languages mobilise a rich system of addressee-focal forms (Hungarian, German, French, Russian, Japanese, Javanese, etc.)

The study of address has always been a significant area of sociolinguistics. Moreover, the rise of sociolinguistics in the 1960s may have been partly due to Brown and Gilman's (1960) often quoted paper on address (and Brown and Ford's [1961] paper written at roughly the same time, on the same topic) – cf. Murray (1994: 282–286).

The binary distinction between *tu/vos*[3] is the basis of all the forms of the Hungarian system of address: intradyadically invariant verb forms referring to the listener(s) (*beszélsz*[4], *beszél/tetszik beszélni*[5] "you speak") and possessive nominal suffixes (*kabátod, kabátja* "your coat"); intradyadically variable nominal and pronominal address forms (Józsi [a first name form]; *Kovács úr* "Mister Kovács"/doktor úr "Mister doctor"; *te, maga/ön* "you") and greetings *(Heló!, Jó napot!, Tiszteletem!).*

The elements of the system of address are unusual sociolinguistic variables. First, most elements are not distributed according to the standard/non-standard verticality, as in the case of most other sociolinguistic variables (where one variant is standard, the others are non-standard). Second, the binary basis of the system within frequently communicating dyads (at least in Hungarian) is practically invariant. And third, address is fundamentally relational: it defines and keeps redefining the relationship of the *dyad*[6].

The choice between T and V is frequent and unavoidable in everyday interaction, since, although in Hungarian nominal and pronominal address forms are dropped when not in focus position, verb forms referring to the listener(s), or interaction-framing greetings[7] are hard to avoid[8], even when people find it awkward to have to make the choice. This frequent pressure for repetition points to the importance of the information carried by the system of address. (Its importance for interlocutors is also indicated by the fact that during my interviews almost everybody readily remembered whether s/he was on T- or V-terms with everybody else in the group, while not necessarily remembering the other's hair-colour or whether the other wore glasses or not.) So what is this information the speaker is forced to repeat again and again?

While most sociolinguistic variables are speaker-based (listener-related variables are rarely systematically operationalised in the literature[9]), address forms are *necessarily* dyad-based, because *interlocutors are forced to negotiate or acknowledge the definition of their relationship: the speaker's and interlocutor's "sameness" (coded with the use of* tu-*forms) or "difference" (coded with the use of* vos-*forms).*

2 See Paulston (1976), and Fang and Heng (1983), respectively.

3 usually abbreviated as T/V, on the basis of the Latin *tu/vos*

4 2nd person-inflections for T

5 3rd person-inflections for V

6 Two people in verbal interaction (not a stable pair, as in, e.g., sociometry).

7 For an interpretation of greetings as language games, see Kiefer (1980).

8 This is explained by the principle of the avoidance ritual by Goffman (1956), and by that of negative politeness by Brown and Levinson (1978).

9 With some exceptions, for example Harvey Sacks' recipient design (1972), Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1978), Howard Giles' accommodation theory (e.g., Giles and Smith 1979) and Alan Bell's audience design (1984).

But what counts when deciding whether two individuals are the "same" or "different"? The sociolinguistic variables make it possible to quantify which human attributes, coded as variables, carry importance for the given group, because the relational variables make quantifiable those differences along which attributes are emphasised with the help of the rules of language use. The rule structure's unit of reference is therefore not the individual, but the dyad. Moreover, the dyad's choice is not influenced by *a priori,* mechanistic rules, but by the group-specific order of importance of human attributes (quantified by the linguist as variables) elaborated in their interactions.

Not only the variables of the address system, but any other *dichotomous* (or dichotomised) relational sociolinguistic variables[10] negotiated by the dyad make it quantifiable which attributes are valid, value-laden for the group, from position in the financial, cultural, consumer, etc. verticality to regional or ethnic affiliation to intelligence, to political preferences to accent or range of communicative repertoires. The basis of estimation is that dyad-members can be similar or different along countless attributes, and the differences may be variant along the attributes and along the dyads, as well. Based on the characteristic value of the dichotomous (or dichotomised) variable, as negotiated by the dyad, we can decide if the dyad defined themselves as "same" or "different". It is, of course, impossible to figure out which attributes were the basis of choice for a given dyad. But the aggregates for a group will yield the attributes chosen more often than chance, and the respective variables can also be ordered. Thus we can also compare groups.

This method of calculation supports an inductive choice of variables that are significant in the group's inequality structure. The analysis based on the dyads' verbal interaction grasps the important attributes *in statu nascendi,* at the very moment when value is rendered to them, when they are reinforced, questioned or neglected.

The first hypothesis: Solidarity-oriented versus status-oriented norm

Among Hungarian adults non-reciprocity in verbal address is marginal.[11] Therefore (instead of Brown and Gilman's individualistic concepts: *power semantic*

10 For example, in an informal conversation the proportion of speakers' turn lengths; or, on the level of speech acts, the proportion of agreeing and contradicting utterances, etc.

11 This is not caused by the weakening either of the linguistic expression of powerlessness or of hierarchies. The ratio of non-reciprocal verbal address (the subordinate using V, the superordinate using T) in the three studied databases were as follows: department: 0.7% (1 out of the 153 dyads); company: 1% (12:1132); hospital ward: 3.5% (30:894). Non-reciprocal address in Hungarian is present in greetings and in pronominal address, and is widespread in nominal address. For example, the boss may address the secretary by her first name (often adding a diminutive), e.g. *Katika,* while the secretary may address the boss by family name + title, or title + title, e.g. *Kovács úr* "Mister Kovács", *Szabó doktor* "Doctor Szabó", *tanár úr* "Mister teacher". The choice between V-pronouns ön and maga was reported in the interviews to depend the same way on "up-talk" vs. "down-talk". Non-reciprocity also influences the dynamics of a dyad's relationship (e.g., who can initiate the only possible change in verbal addressing, a switch from V to T, a ritual called pertu [from the Latin "per *tu*"] in Hungarian, similar to *Bruderschaft trinken* "to drink brotherhood" in German). Non-reciprocal verbal address is more frequent in adult-child and interethnic interactions (e.g., Hungarians addressing Gypsies, or Hungarians addressing foreigners learning Hungarian).

vs. *solidarity semantic,* which were based on the reciprocity – non-reciprocity division) the concepts *solidarity-orientation* and *status-orientation* are introduced, as this study focuses on to what extent a hierarchical arrangement is valued by a group.

(1) In an extremely solidarity-oriented group, where no dividing dimension is acknowledged, everybody in the group will consider one another "similar", therefore T-usage will be universal.

(2) In an extremely status-oriented group several dividing dimensions will be acknowledged, power-related dimensions (e.g., rank, education) being the strongest ones. Therefore, T will be rare, and only possible in dyads with similar rank or education, while V will be used by all other dyads. Non-reciprocal T/V will be possible, based on the difference in rank or education – corresponding to a Brown–Gilman-type power semantic.

(3) A group with universal V is predicted to be breaking apart. In such a group neither power, nor solidarity are acknowledged with the help of address (in Hungarian, or any other language otherwise exploiting T/V).

But these extremes (idealtypical cases in the weberian sense) are infrequent. In actual groups the following hypotheses will be tested: a given group's norm is *status-oriented* if the majority of the dyads uses *vos*-forms (this is the quantitative criterion) *and* directly power-related variables (e.g., rank, education) have a greater influence over the choice between address forms, that is, most dyads use T only if their members have similar ranks and/or education (this is the qualitative criterion). A given group's norm is *solidarity-oriented* if the majority of the dyads uses *tu*-forms *and* indirectly power-related variables (e.g., sex, age) have at least the same amount of influence over the choice between address forms as directly power-related variables, that is, if for example, sex and age differences are at least as important as rank and schooling differences. To the extent we are able to quantify the respective strengths of these overlapping dimensions with the help of everyday verbal addressing, we can glimpse into the group's value system.

Naturally, the use of a verbal *tu* does not mean that the speaker performs solidarity, it is rather a "promise" of solidarity. The use of *vos* across values of power-related variables is the same way not power itself, but a reminder of the possible execution of power or authority on the part of the superordinate, and its acceptance on the part of the subordinate.

One aim of this paper is to test the validity of differentiation between the above two norms, and to test the hypothesis whether the distribution of verbal T/V is indeed related to these norms.

The second hypothesis: The rigidity of the hierarchy

Formal hierarchies, i.e. organisations, can be different in terms of *rigidity.* This concept can be grasped by the difference between the hierarchy of a prison or army barracks (a total institution in Goffman's terms [1961]) on the one hand, and, say, the editorial office of an alternative journal, on the other. While in a rigidly hierarchised organisation the distribution of tasks and decisions is centralised, in a less rigidly

hierarchised one tasks are distributed jointly, and decisions are made by those responsible for the given task.[12]

The other aim of this paper is to test the hypothetical relationship between hierarchical rigidity and the status- or solidarity-oriented group norm: whether more rigid hierarchies promote a status-oriented norm, and less rigid hierarchies promote a solidarity-oriented norm. After a subjective evaluation of rigidity in the first two groups I studied, hierarchical rigidity was operationalised by three indicators formulated as interview-questions in the third group (formal-status dependence of decision-making, the proportion of vertical to horizontal interaction in the formal hierarchy, the transparency of improving one's status within the formal hierarchy), but, lacking comparability, the classification of the three groups here follows my subjective evaluation.

DYADIC ANALYSIS

The data come from fieldwork (observation and interviews) about daily address usage in three Hungarian organisational settings in Budapest with supposedly different hierarchical rigidities:

- a university department with relatively low rigidity (n=18, N=152 dyads using reciprocal verbal address),
- two sections of a company with average rigidity (n=55, N=1120),
- a hospital ward with a very rigid structure (n=46, N=870).

The fields were chosen based on theoretical considerations,[13] not as tools to understand present Hungarian social problems, but rather to approach a universal human patterns: the emergence of values in interaction. The validity requirements are different from those of empirical, descriptive studies. Therefore in statistical analyses each workplace was regarded as a population, and not as a sample of the whole or a part of the Hungarian speech community, e.g., as a prototypical university department or hospital ward. Consequently comparative generalisations are never quantified.

I used two different types of quantitative methods to analyse the data. The *dyadic analysis* presented in this paper aims to explain the group norm, as defined above – assuming that the individual perceives the group norm through dyadic interactions. (Ego either watches others in interaction, or gets in interaction with others.) The dyadic analysis has priority in the investigation, as newcomers experience the group norm as a compulsive, Durkheimian, "social fact" to comply with, a constraint beyond their influence. This, however, does not remain the case: every speaker continually forms the norm within each of their interactions. Variable linguistic behaviour – thus the features of the system of address or the temporal features of conversation – always relies on the negotiation of the interactants, who can mutually

12 This distinction is similar to that made by Burns and Stalker (1961).

13 The historical dimension is ignored here. Let me note, however, that in the Hungarian state administration between the two world wars not only pay category, but also the forms of nominal address were formally prescribed for each civil service grade. After 1948, the single, leveling nominal address *elvtárs* "comrade" replaced the previous highly sophisticated system, finding its abrupt demise in 1989.

control how much variability is permitted. By controlling each other's language use they jointly "decide" which forms are acceptable or norm-breaking. (Thus among Hungarians an unacceptable choice of verbal address sometimes results in the interlocutor's challenge, though mostly early in the acquaintance. This is often the topic of metapragmatic narratives on T/V-usage.)[14]

The dyadic analysis seeks to decide whether each of the three workplaces follows a status-oriented or a solidarity-oriented group norm. Comparing the results at the three workplaces I found differences according to both criteria, and some subgroups revealed additional differences.

The qualitative criterion: The influence of sociological variables

I analysed the relationship between nine sociological variables and the sociolinguistic variable (T/V)[15]:

Dependent sociolinguistic variable:

T/V	reciprocal *tu/vos* usage in verbal address (dichotomous)

Independent sociological variables:

DSEX	sex/gender difference (DSEX2 distinguishes same-sex and different-sex dyads)
SUMAGE	sum of age
DAGE	difference of age
SUMSCH	sum of schooling
DSCH	difference of schooling
SUMRANK	sum of rank
DRANK	difference of rank
DSPAT	frequency of routine contact (measured by relative spatial distance of office room)
LACQ	length of acquaintance (in the hospital ward only)

As the basis of address usage is not the individual, but the dyad, instead of individual gender, age, schooling and rank, relational variables had to be used.[16] I calculated, for example, whether the absolute age of the dyad (SUMAGE) had an influence over the sociolinguistic variable or not: whether younger or older dyads used more T, or the variable exerted no significant influence. Differences were tested the same way: for example, whether dyads with a smaller age difference (DAGE) used more T than dyads with a considerable age difference, or this variable did not

14 The other individual analysis studies the individual's conformity to, and divergence from, the norm being formed by the group.

15 The variables were chosen on theoretical and heuristic grounds. On the one hand, members of a dyad are usually supposed to decide between T and V in the early moments of their first encounter, based on direct (sex, age) and indirect attributes (situation, appearance, behavior, language or variety choice, or even more information in the case of a third-party introduction: social position, education, etc.), and in a lot of cases this choice is maintained later. It is a valid choice to study them as variables, if speakers decide on these bases. On the other hand, I also asked my Hungarian friends and audiences what the bases of choice between T and V were in frequently interacting dyads. These variables were named every time.

16 A program to build the database was written by Csaba Gyori.

significantly discriminate. My initial hypothesis concerning these two variables was that both a larger value for SUMAGE (i.e. a dyad with elder members) and for DAGE (a considerable age difference) would facilitate a significantly higher probability of V-usage.

I initially hypothesised the same way that a larger difference of schooling (DSCH), a larger rank difference (DRANK) and a sex difference within the dyad (DSEX2) would all support a higher probability of V-usage. I had no hypothesis about the influence of absolute rank (SUMRANK) and absolute schooling (SUMSCH), i.e. whether dyads with lower or with higher ranks and schooling would choose V more often. The frequency of routine contact (DSPAT) and (at the hospital ward) the length of acquaintance (LACQ) were also tested for possible influence, hypothesising that both the scarcity of routine contact and a shorter length of acquaintance would increase the probability of V-usage.

Table 1 shows the effect of the standardised variables on the distribution of the sociolinguistic variable for the three workplaces, as ordered by their b-coefficient results calculated using logistic regression (required in the case of a dichotomous variable; see Menard 1995 for details of this measure).

Table 1. Logistic regression coefficients predicting T/V use

Department		Company		Hospital ward	
"low rigidity"	β	"medium"	β	"high"	β
DSEX2	2.3505**	DSEX2	2.4902**	DRANK	3.1740**
DAGE	1.1962**	DAGE	1.3057**	SUMRANK	1.5683*
DSPAT	0.6687*	DSPAT	1.2966**	SUMAGE	1.5272**
SUMAGE	0.6424*	SUMAGE	1.0731**	SUMSCH	-1.3432*
		DSCH	0.5883**	DSEX2	0.9612**
		DRANK	0.5669**	(LACQ)	-0.9465**
		SUMRANK	-0.5438**	DSCH	0.8582*
				DAGE	0.7789**
				DSPAT	0.5754**

**: $p < 0.001$, *: $p < 0.05$

At the department *power-related variables* (the difference of rank, absolute rank, the difference of schooling, absolute schooling) exert no influence at all, they are not included in the model. On the other hand, all *indirectly power-related variables* do, with sex difference (DSEX2) highly leading, age difference (DAGE) following. The frequency of routine contact (DSPAT) and absolute age (SUMAGE) have a small, but not negligible influence.

In moderately and highly rigid hierarchies directly power-related variables exert a varying degree of influence over the dyads' choice of verbal address. The influence of absolute schooling (SUMSCH) cannot be detected at the company. While at the former workplace the influence of these variables only follow that of the indirectly power-related variables, at the latter workplace power-related variables, most notably rank-variables, take precedence over every other variable included. For the ease of comparison, see the same results in *Figure 1*.

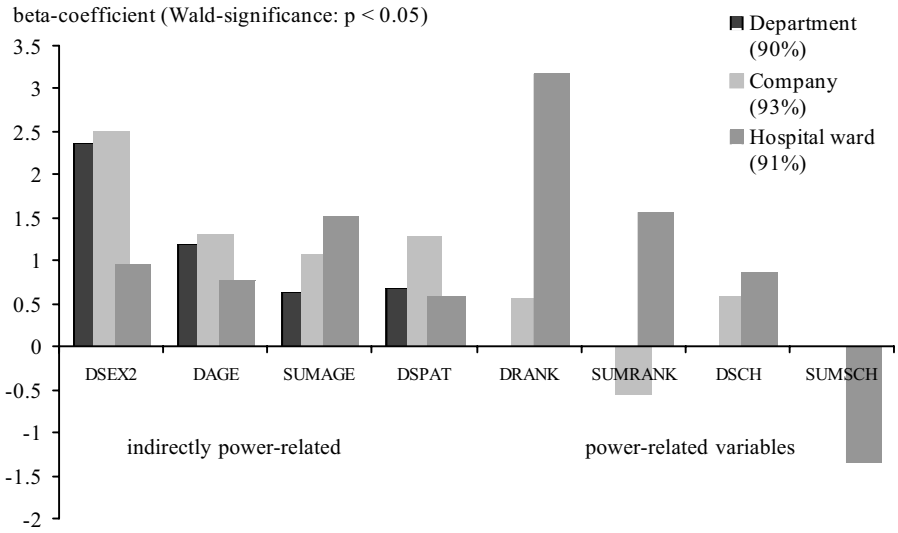


Figure 1. The effect of sociological variables on T/V choice (Logistic regression results)[17]

Figure 1 makes it more clear that apart from the variable of absolute rank at the company and that of absolute schooling at the hospital ward, variables either do not exert any influence on the sociolinguistic variable (in five cases), or a higher value of each variable increases the likelihood of V. In other words, the likelihood of *vos*-usage is greater in dyads of different sexes or with a greater age difference or among two elder members or among members working farther apart or with a greater rank difference or with a greater difference in schooling than in dyads of the same sex or with a smaller age difference or those with two younger members or members working closer to each other or with a smaller rank difference or with a smaller difference in schooling. Dyads where both members have a high rank will more likely be on T-terms at the company, but on V-terms at the hospital ward. The negative value for absolute schooling at the hospital ward means that dyads where both members have more years of schooling they are more likely to be on T-terms.

Among the variables indirectly related to power, the effects of sex difference, age difference and the frequency of routine contact are the strongest at the company. The latter can be explained by the circumstances: co-workers at the two adjacent buildings of the company had infrequent possibilities of chance encounters and thus of interacting verbally, therefore this physical distance, if nothing else, may have predisposed those eventually getting into contact to categorise each other as "different" (and so be on V-terms). At the other two workplaces routine contacts were much more frequent, which may explain the fact that the effect of this variable is similarly low. The influence of sex difference is high both at the department and the company, while at the hospital ward it is less remarkable. The effect of absolute age

17 The percentages in the legend indicate how much the regression is able to correctly predict the observed result with the help of the calculated b-coefficients.

slightly increases over dyads' choice between T and V as does hierarchical rigidity, which means that at the hospital ward two elderly people will be more likely on V-terms than at the university department.

The growing influence of directly power-related variables as a function of hierarchical rigidity is much more definite. This difference is the most visible in the case of rank difference: while its influence on T/V-choice is absent at the university department, it is the most influential variable at the hospital ward. In other words, while at the department the choice between T and V is unpredictable on the basis of rank difference, at the hospital ward V can be quite reliably predicted for a dyad with a considerable rank difference even if dyad-members are of the same sex and of similar ages (see *Figures 3 and 7* for more detail below). A similar, though less sharp, increase in the effect of schooling difference was found as a function of hierarchical rigidity. Absolute schooling shows no significant influence either at the university department or at the company, that is, a considerable difference between the T/V habits of dyads with less and with more educated members cannot be detected. On the other hand, at the hospital ward dyads with more years of schooling are more likely to be on T-terms than those with fewer years of schooling.

The analysis of variance revealed similar relationships among the variables: significant differences were found between groups of dyads on T and groups of dyads on V along most of the variables at each of the three workplaces. The variables had little or no distinguishable effect at the department (even significant F-values were small). Power-related variables had a sharply growing effect as a function of hierarchical rigidity, among them the difference of rank and of schooling had distinctly high F-ratios at the hospital ward.

To sum up, the measures based on the qualitative criterion fully confirmed the hypotheses: the most rigidly hierarchised hospital ward seems to promote a status-oriented norm, the least rigidly hierarchised department to promote a solidarity-oriented norm. The company with a medium level of rigidity appears to fall between the two.

The quantitative criterion: The proportion of T to V

As the reader may remember, the hypothesis predicted a T-majority for a solidarity-oriented group norm, in a less rigid hierarchy, and a V-majority for a status-oriented group norm, in a more rigid hierarchy – following the quantitative criterion.

The hypothesis was confirmed at two workplaces: at the low-rigidity department dyads on T, and at the medium-rigidity company dyads on V were in the majority. The rigidly hierarchical hospital ward, however, showed a T-majority (see the Total column of *Figure 2*).

The first two workplaces yielded the expected results when broken down by the variable of sex difference: dyads on T-terms become fewer and fewer if we move from female-to-female, to male-to-male and to female-to-male dyads *(Figure 2)*. T is universal at the university department and is above 80 percent at the company in female-to-female dyads, while it is found in 95 and 58 percent male-to-male dyads,

as well as in 55 and 8 percent in female-to-male dyads at the department and the company, respectively. At the hospital ward every male-to-male dyad was on T-terms, which may be caused by the disproportion of the sexes characteristic of Hungarian hospitals: among the 46 co-workers there were only five males, all of them physicians, therefore the most influential variable, rank difference, had low values in each of their dyads, in contrast to female-to-female dyads. (Males and females are in roughly equal proportions as physicians, but no males are in inferior positions, as nurses or housekeeping staff. There are males in inferior positions in hospitals, e.g., orderlies or porters, but they do not belong to wards.) The high majority of women must have caused the higher than expected overall T at the hospital ward.

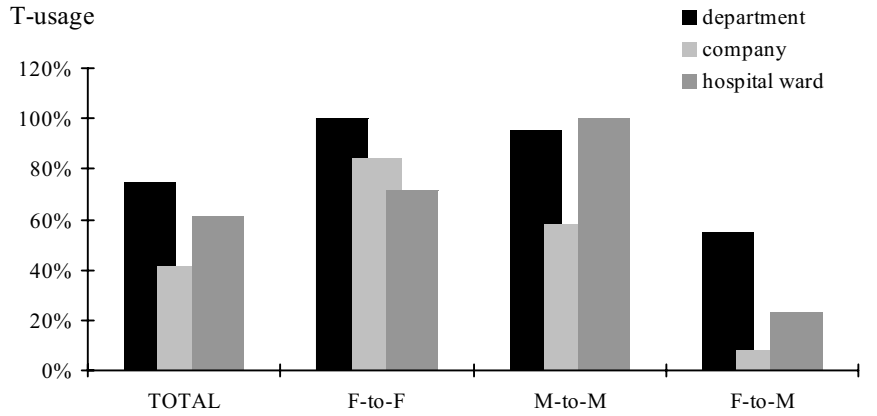


Figure 2. The proportion of dyads on T (total; and by DSEX)

Due to these distributional characteristics the qualitative and quantitative criteria may clash. Since it is a more sophisticated measure, the qualitative criterion will be given priority, possibly complemented by the results of the quantitative criterion.[18]

A comparison of the difference of sex and the difference of rank

As can be seen above, the difference of sex and the difference of rank seem to be the most important attributes on the basis of which group members at the three workplaces decide whether to be on T-terms or V-terms with their co-workers.

The difference of rank (DRANK) precisely followed rigidity level (and the definition): while it had no influence over T/V at the university department, and had a medium degree of influence at the company, it had the highest effect at the hospital ward. *Figure 3* shows how the proportion of T decreases (while at the same time the

18 Hence a workplace follows a status-oriented group norm where everybody is on T-terms with everybody else apart from the manager, who is on V-terms with most of the co-workers. (One of the mobile-phone companies in Budapest is said to follow this routine.)

proportion of V increases) as a function of rank difference there: while among those with the same rank T is almost universal, T linearly decreases as rank difference increases. All the dyads with a considerable rank difference use V.

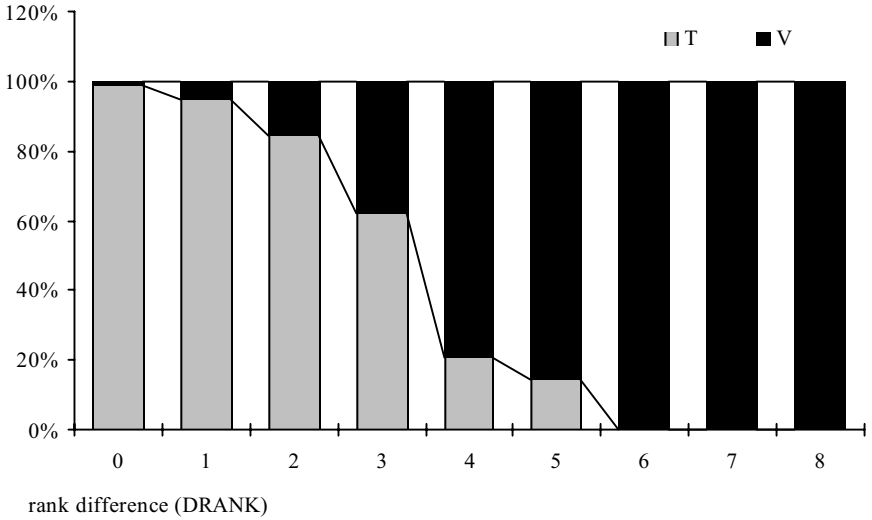
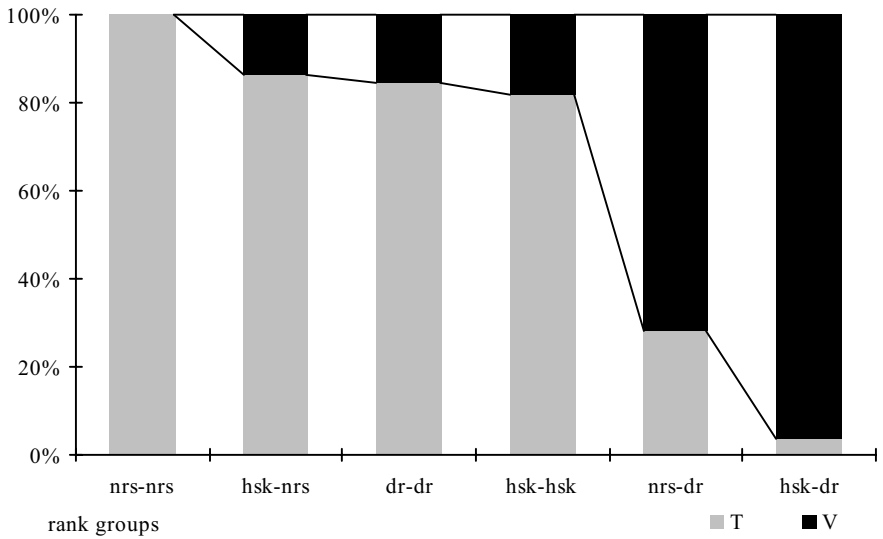


Figure 3. Dyads on T and V at the hospital ward (by rank differences)



hsk: housekeeper, nrs: nurse, dr: physician

Figure 4. Dyads on T and V at the hospital ward (by rank groups)

If rank differences are simplified to the utmost to differentiate between physicians on the one hand and nurses and housekeepers on the other, dyads with members in the two subgroups turn out to use V with the highest probability[19] *(Table 2)*.

For an easier understanding of rank differences, dyads were re-grouped according to rank groups (housekeepers, nurses, physicians) in *Figure 4*. Nurse-to-nurse dyads invariably use T among one another. Dyads with members in the same rank group use T over 80 percent of the time, irrespective of other attributes. (Dyads consisting of nurses and/or housekeepers are invariant with respect to sex). T is infrequent in nurse-to-doctor and housekeeper-to-doctor dyads.

Table 2. The distribution of T/V for two rank groups at the hospital ward

	T	V	
Non-physician to non-physician	353 95%	19 5%	372 43%
Physician to physician	86 88%	12 12%	98 11%
Non-physician to physician	90 23%	304 77%	394 46%
Total	529 61%	335 39%	864

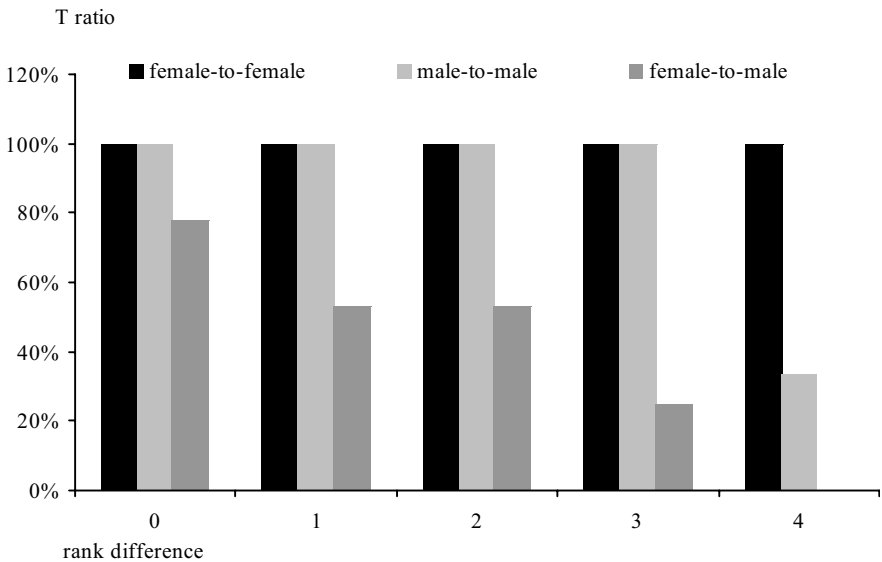


Figure 5. The proportion of T in dyads at the department (by sex difference and rank difference)

19 Within dyads with members in the same subgroup, physician-physician dyads use significantly less T than non-physician – non-physician dyads. Chi-square for the four cells: 6.41 ($p < 0.012$). Odds ratio: 2.59 (see Rudas 1998).

Figures 5-7 show the interaction of sex-difference and rank difference. At the department *(Figure 5)* all female-to-female dyads use T. Female-to-male dyads are sensitive to rank differences in their T/V-choice. In male-to-male dyads the proportion of T decreases only in the case of a greater rank-difference.

At the company *(Figure 6)* T never falls below 75 percent in female-to-female dyads, while male-to-male and female-to-male dyads are sensitive to rank difference. All female-to-male dyads with a considerable rank difference use V.

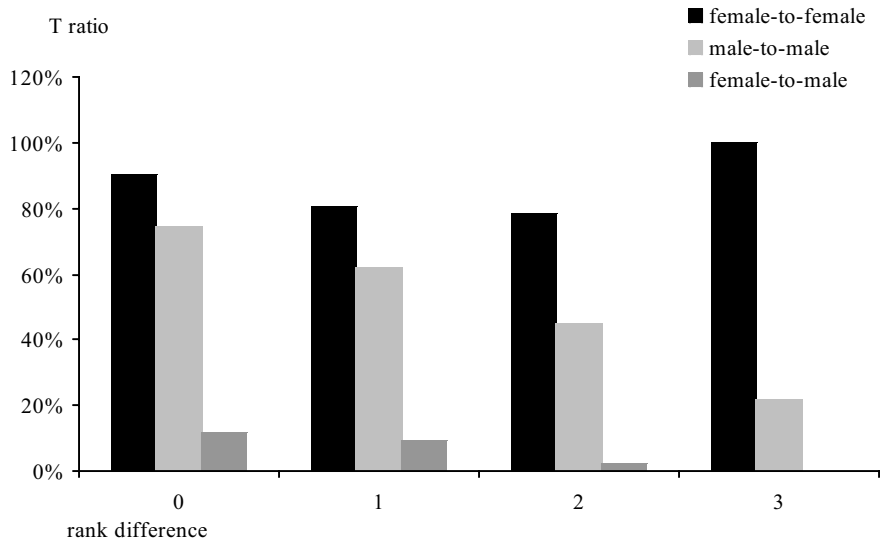


Figure 6. The proportion of T in dyads at the company (by sex difference and rank difference)

At the hospital ward *(Figure 7)* female-to-female and female-to-male dyads are sensitive to rank difference. All the male-to-male dyads use T, but since all the men are physicians, rank difference cannot be large among them. One or both members of dyads with a rank difference over 5 are female – all of these dyads use V.

A comparison of the two sections of the company

The two sections of the company were originally chosen to make a comparison between two types of work possible. More precisely, the comparison served to test two contradicting hypotheses:

– According to the classic concept in stratification research (let us call it a macro-hypothesis), white-collar (management and administration) and blue-collar (production) environments will promote different distributions of T and V, as V is likely to be more frequent in rural and traditional worker milieus. This is what, for example, Bates and Benigni (1975) found in their interview-based Italian study: young upper-class speakers were found to be the least formal, young lower-class

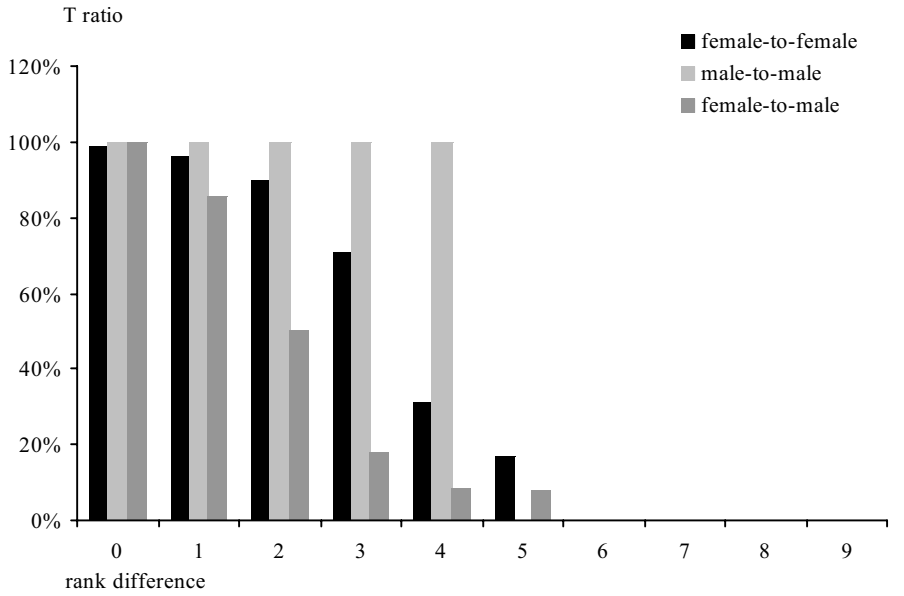


Figure 7. The proportion of T in dyads at the hospital ward (by sex difference and rank difference)

speakers the most formal; the results of older speakers were between these two. The macro-hypothesis can be tested by the quantitative criterion.

– On the basis of the given community and my experiences I presumed that office workers assisting the management would follow a status-oriented, while manual labourers regularly helping out one another would follow a solidarity-oriented group norm. Let us call this the micro-hypothesis, which can be tested by the qualitative criterion.

T was found much more frequently in the white-collar environment (T: 128 dyads, V: 39 dyads) than in the blue-collar one (T: 112 dyads, V: 120 dyads). The influence of the standardised variables was examined with the help of logistic regression: in the blue-collar section power-related variables did not exert an influence over the dyads' T/V-choices *(Table 3),* while in the white-collar section they did.[20] (This influence may be traced back to the very presence of those with the highest formal power at the company.)

Thus the simpler quantitative comparison supported the macro-hypothesis. But if an answer is sought not only to *how many?,* but also to *who to whom?,* we find that in *this* white-collar group, apart from age, rank and schooling are also important distinguishing attributes among group members, while in *this* blue-collar group rank and schooling are not essential distinguishing attributes – as far as it can be detected from their verbal address usage.

20 DSEX2 had to be left out of the analysis in the blue-collar section, due to complementary results in same-sex dyads: all female-to-female dyads used T, the single male-to-male dyad I have results about used V.

Table 3. Logistic regression coefficients predicting T/V choice at the two sections of the company (without DSEX2 in the white-collar section)

blue-collar	β	white-collar	β
DSEX2	2.2685**	SUMAGE	6.4883**
DSPAT	1.6018*	DRANK	5.0114**
SUMAGE	0.8292*	DAGE	4.3534**
DAGE	0.6631*	SUMSCH	4.0467*
		DSCH	2.7558*

**: $p < 0.001$ *: $p < 0.05$

CONCLUSION

In this research I observed and recorded the phenomena of address used in Hungarian groups of frequently interacting dyads. Among these, the most accessible but also the most conservative[21] feature, the binary basis of address (appearing on verbs in Hungarian) was analysed here.

By regarding the distributions of address as norms, I assigned meaning to them mainly as a function of these norms' orientation to power and hierarchical structuring. I defined status-oriented and solidarity-oriented group norms by the order of importance of variables on the one hand, and by the ratio of *tu*- and *vos*-usage in the group, on the other. A non-linguistic phenomenon, the degree of rigidity in a hierarchy, was associated with these two types of norms; a rigid hierarchy was hypothesised to promote a status-oriented norm, while a less rigid hierarchy was supposed to promote a solidarity-oriented norm.

Hypotheses about the type of the norm and the hierarchy rigidity in relation to the distribution of binary address were tested in three organisations. They were fully confirmed by the results from two workplaces. The partial uncertainties at the third workplace may be due either to a disproportional distribution of an important attribute, or to the discrepancy between the two criteria.

By comparing address usage at two subsections of one of the organisations I demonstrated that theories of address based on macro-concepts are inadequate to understand a group's usage and value-system being formed in interaction.

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21 This is so because it signals an earlier interpretation of the dyad's relationship.

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