

INDEXICALITY, AND ADDRESS TERMS AND PHRASES OF AUSTRALIAN ARABIC YOUTH IN FRIENDSHIP GROUPS

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This paper explains and describes address terms and phrases used in young male friendship groups within some Australian Arabic speaking communities. The emphasis is on finding and describing new linguistic phenomena within the English variations spoken by these groups of young Australians. An indexical theoretical approach drawing from Silverstein (2003) is used to explore group value categories and their association with the choice of address terms. The focus is particularly on links between language choice, identity display, and intergroup relations.

A number of recent linguistic studies have investigated Arabic heritage communities in Sydney. Kiesling's (2005) examination of a variant feature of pronunciation within a migrant ethnolect adopts the indexical theoretical approach to show that a particular linguistic style indexes a stance, and his research calls for more ethnographic work to verify the findings. Clyne and Kipp (2006) find that Arabic has become a significant 'growth language' amongst younger Australians, and assert that at least for Moslem speakers, the language's cultural significance for the community is bound to its religious value. Rieschild (2007) argues for a range of linguistic consequences of the contact between Arabic and English in Australia, links between cultural identities and language choices, and finds inter alia that gender has more significance to these youth than does religion.

English and Arabic address terms (personal names and their derivations; nicknames; family names and terms of address like "mate" and "Habiib") and their use is explored here. Analysis focuses on the terms of address used, that is, the openings and closings of conversation between participants, with greetings and farewells being of particular interest. However, Arabic address terms and phrases can also occur throughout an entire conversation. Participants have been drawn from some Christian and Moslem sections from within the larger communities of Arabic heritage in the South West suburbs of Sydney; however, the data gathered so far suggest that ethnicity and religion are not emphasized as underlying group values by these subjects. Rather, what is being revealed is a significant emphasis placed on the values of the small friendship group, as well as on family links.

Clyne, M. & Kipp, S. (2006) Australia's Community Languages. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 180, 7-21.

Kiesling, S. F. (2005) Variation, stance and style: Word-final *-er*, high rising tone, and ethnicity in Australian English. *English World-Wide*, 26, 1-42.

Rieschild, V. R. (2007) Influences of Language Proficiency, Bilingual Socialization, and Urban Youth Identities on Producing Different Arabic-English Voices in Australia. *Novitas: Research on Youth and Language*, 1, 34-52.

Silverstein, M. (2003) Indexical order and the dialectics of sociolinguistic life. *Language & Communication*, 23, 193.

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