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2021-11-24

Piippo, I 2021, Mirror-like address practice in Arabic-medium classroom interaction : Managing social relations and intersubjectivity. in J Lindström, R Laury, A Peräkylä & M-L Sorjonen (eds), Intersubjectivity in Action : Studies in language and social interaction. Pragmatics Beyond New Series, vol. 326, John Benjamins, Amsterdam, pp. 109-134. <https://doi.org/10.1075/pbns.326>

<http://hdl.handle.net/10138/351003>

10.1075/pbns.326.06pii

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This document is an author submitted manuscript of the following publication:

Piippo, Irina (2021) *Mirror-like Address Practice in Arabic-Medium Classroom Interaction: Managing Social Relations* - Jan Lindström, Ritva Laury, Anssi Peräkylä & Marja-Leena Sorjonen (eds.) *Intersubjectivity in Action: Studies in Language and Social Interactions. Pragmatics and Beyond* New Series 326, pp. 109-134. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

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Mirror-like Address Practice in Arabic-Medium Classroom Interaction: Managing Social Relations and Intersubjectivity

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Abstract

This paper examines address inversion in classroom interactions in Arabic. Address inversion, found in various languages, is an address practice where the speaker addresses the recipient with the same address term that the recipient would normally use to call the speaker. Inverted address is a denotationally incongruent, asymmetric address used by speakers who claim cultural seniority. By analyzing the position of address inversion in interaction (in turns, sequences, and activities) and utilizing the notion of *stance*, this paper examines the ways in which address inversion manages intersubjectivity by constructing the shifting relationships between the participants in classroom interaction. The data are classroom interactions video recorded in Palestinian territories.

Keywords: address inversion, transposed reference, stance, classroom interaction, family interaction, pre-positioned address term, post-positioned address term, transition, directive, admonition

Running head: Mirror-like Address Practice

1 Introduction

This paper discusses intersubjectivity by focusing on address inversion (Braun 1988) in Arabic-medium classroom interaction in Palestinian school context. Address inversion is a specific case of nominal address where the speaker addresses the recipient with a term that the recipient would normally use for the speaker. Typically, it is resource that is asymmetrically available for those that assume cultural seniority. For example, in my Palestinian classroom data, teachers can address their student or students by using the forms *ustāz* ‘professor, teacher (m.)’ and *miss* ‘miss, teacher (f.)’ normally used to address male and female teachers, respectively.

I will examine how address inversion is deployed to position participants both socially and interactionally in the school context. While address practices typically position the recipient from the speaker’s perspective, address inversion functions more like a mirror that takes the recipient’s perspective and displays the social position claimed by the

speaker. As such, inverted address can be seen as manifesting intersubjectivity in the sense of the potential of seeing ourselves and our actions through the other's eyes (Mead 1934). By utilizing the notion of *stance*, my analyses focus on the way in which address inversion manages intersubjectivity by constructing the shifting relationships between the participants in classroom interaction.

2 Background

2.1 Address Inversion in Interaction

Address practices are one of the means for constructing social relations in interaction (Agha 2007: 278–300). With the choice of address forms, the co-participants can, among other things, regulate social distance between them, negotiate the formality of the situation, and display affective stances (e.g. Brown & Gilman 1960; Ervin-Tripp 1972; Norrby & Wide 2015; Lerner 2003). Typically, address forms are pronouns, names, titles and kin terms that can all be directly linked with the addressee. Addressing someone as *Raja*, *doktōra Raja* 'doctor (f.) Raja', *uhti* 'my sister' or *habībti* 'my darling, my loved one (f.)' denotes a person whose qualities include being an individual named Raja, being a doctor, the speaker's sister, or being dear to the speaker. Although the action of addressing is oriented towards the

addressee, it is the speaker's perspective that is normally represented in the role configurations. This is to say that the speaker is typically the deictic origo (Bühler 1990[1934]: 117) or the point of reference from which the relationship is described. Addressing someone as *uhti* formulates a sketch of a referent where, from the speaker's perspective, the person addressed is a sister, either in a literal or figurative sense.

Unlike typical uses of address forms, inverted address does not focus on the attributes of the addressee (e.g. *mom*). Instead, address inversion is a case of transposed reference (Agha 2007: 358; see also Hanks 1990: 192 ff.; Haviland 1996), where the deictic origo is transposed to the addressee, and the asymmetric relationship between the participants is construed from the addressee's viewpoint. For instance, in Arabic, a mother can address her little son or daughter as *māma* 'mom' and a father can address his relatively young children as *bāba* 'daddy.' These mirror-like address practices are most frequently encountered with various kinship terms, but basically any nominal address term that denotes cultural seniority can be inverted. In my Palestinian classroom data, inverted address is an established yet relatively marginal way for teachers to address their student or students. The instance below (Example 1) is from a situation where a male teacher sees a female student enter the school premises after the first lesson has already started and addresses her with inverted address.

Example 1

Ustāz Sayyid: *ustāz,* *inti* *mit'ahhre.*
 teacher.M.SG you:F.SG late:F.SG
 'Teacher, you are late.'

(field notes 15.4.2013)

Address inversion is a denotationally incongruent way of addressing someone (Agha 2007: 356). In the example above, the address form denotes an adult male whose occupation is to instruct, but the co-textual semiotic cues indicate a different kind of referent. The co-textual linguistic signs in the remainder of Ustāz Sayyid's turn point to a female second person addressee (the feminine form of the 2nd person personal pronoun *inti*, and the 2nd person feminine form of 'late') and the co-textually readable facts (Agha 2007: ch. 1) of role inhabitation (e.g. who is producing the utterance, and to whom it is directed) show that in this case, a male teacher is addressing an approximately ten-year-old female student. Agha calls these kinds of denotationally incongruent but interactionally appropriate ways of referring to speech participants normalized tropes. Despite their incongruent co-textual patterns, they are readily understandable and can become commonplace resources for constructing social relations in interaction.

The tropic nature of address inversion highlights the need to study address practices and their semiotic effects in a context-sensitive way. Previous studies on Arabic report mainly two types of stereotypical construals for mirror-like address. First, inverted kinship terms are often

claimed to function as signs that convey endearment and affection (Ayoub 1964; Yassin 1977, 1975). Secondly, they are also seen as indexing authority, and frequently appear in contexts where the addressee is reprimanded or urged to do something. Moreover, often in interaction these dimensions are said to be displayed simultaneously so that the affective component mitigates the display of authority.¹ Yassin (1977: 300–301) notes that in these kinds of instances the senior “urges rather than commands and cajoles rather than imposes.” These semiotic dimensions of affect and authority can also be seen in my data from the school context, and in the brief example above.

Although earlier research is based on anthropological (Ayoub 1964) or sociolinguistic fieldwork (Yassin 1977, 1975; Parkinson 1985; Braun 1988), address inversion in Arabic has not been previously studied as a part of larger interactional sequences or multimodal semiotic behavior. Ayoub (1964) maintains that the construal of mirror-like address is highly dependent on other co-occurring signs, for instance the speaker’s tone of voice, but the data in the earlier studies does not enable a more detailed examination of how, for instance, the bipolar indexical potential of affect and authority is actualized in interaction.

¹ In her interlingual study on terms of address in various languages, Braun (1988: 292–293) notes that these two axes of indexicality are consistent in all the languages where address inversion was encountered (for a list and further details on these languages, see Braun 1988: 266 ff).

In this chapter, I approach this question by examining how address inversion is deployed in practice in school interactions to position participants both socially and interactionally. More specifically, I will also examine how social positioning accomplished through inverted address is linked with and adapted to institutional, context-specific discursive practices and normative expectations in the school context. As the earlier research on family settings indicates that address inversion is often part of exchanges where affective and emotional stances are displayed and managed, I am especially interested in whether inverted address is associated with teachers' emotional expressions.

Interactionally-oriented research on address behavior has shown that in addition to managing social relationships, address practices are tightly connected with the organization of unfolding activities. The deployment of address terms marks, for instance, boundaries and transitions between turns, topics and activities (Lerner 2003; Rendle-Short 2007; Butler, Danby & Emmison 2011) and manages the moment-to-moment unfolding positioning of participants by, for instance, indexing disalignment with the addressee (Rendle-Short 2010; Butler et al. 2011). The observations in previous studies that mirror-like address in Arabic is stereotypically linked with, for instance, directives and reprimands suggest that address inversion also has these types of co-text specific functions and plays a role in managing more transient social relations.

2.2 Intersubjectivity in Semiotic Encounters

In social sciences, intersubjectivity is often seen as the bedrock of human social life: in order for coordinated understandings and actions to be possible or a social unit to exist, a common grasp of the situation and the surrounding world is necessary. How these types of co-orientations or co-conceptions are achieved and how exactly intersubjectivity is connected with them has been a matter of varying perspectives. Intersubjectivity has been discussed in terms of the underlying human capacity for being in a world shared with others (Mead 1934; Schutz 1982), a common cultural background or normative basis (Berger & Luckmann 1966: 85–89; Heritage 1984; Linell 2009: 81), and semiotic and interactional resources for managing intersubjectivity (Heritage 1984; Schegloff 1992; Sidnell 2014). The notion has been utilized both in approaches that either represent or draw on phenomenological theorizing (e.g. Schutz, often in conversation analytic research) and to a somewhat lesser extent in research within the pragmatist tradition (e.g. Mead and especially research in linguistic or semiotic anthropology).

What is common to both approaches is that with the notion of intersubjectivity the approaches take a stance on *selfhood*, and the role of *other* in the ontogenesis and ontology of *self*. It is impossible and perhaps unnecessary to draw strict boundaries between phenomenological and pragmatic perspectives as there is research on the interfaces of these

philosophical traditions (e.g. Linell 2009), and a preference for a certain philosophical outlook does not always follow disciplinary lines (e.g. Duranti 2010). However, phenomenological perspectives are often relatively cognitively oriented, due to their focus on structures of experience and consciousness (see e.g. Etelämäki 2016), whereas pragmatist accounts tend to emphasize the primacy of sign-mediated processes in the construction of *self* (see e.g. Mead 1934).

In examining address inversion in the school context I will take a pragmatist, semiotically-oriented perspective to intersubjectivity and focus on semiotic encounters (Agha 2007: 10).² These encounters where “sign-phenomenon or communicative processes connect persons to each other” (Agha 2007: 10), would not be possible if persons were not capable of taking the perspective of the *other*. As pragmatist George Herbert Mead (1934) notes, this intersubjective capacity is at the root of social selves as well as organized social action. For Mead, the self is a reflexive process that is tightly connected with language and other forms of “symbolic interaction.” Through semiotic conduct, the *ego* places herself to the *alter*'s standpoint and comes to understand not only the perspectives of specific *others* but to internalize the attitudes and expectations of the *generalized other* (Mead 1934: 154, 195).³ This reflexive capacity to care about the

² The notion of semiotic encounter orients to the fact that interpersonal communication represents only one, albeit an important kind of encounter, where signs connect persons to each other.

³ *ego* (Latin, 'I') and *alter* (Latin 'other') are used interchangeably with *self* and *other*.

attitudes and expectations of the *other* and the *generalized other* can be called a dimension of selfhood (Kockelman 2006: 13–15; Visakko 2015: 53–55) and the reflexive models of expected, meaningful and appropriate conduct social norms (Piippo 2012: 27).

My research question, however, is also closely intertwined with the way intersubjectivity has been discussed within the conversation analytic tradition. Conversation analysis has been interested in the way structures of talk-in-interaction provide for intersubjectivity in the sense of intersubjective co-ordination. Structures such as turn-taking, action sequencing and repair have been described as an “architecture of intersubjectivity” (Heritage 1984: 254–560; see also Rommetveit 1976), a universal architecture with a sequential and normative nature that functions as a template for action and interpretation. More recently, Jack Sidnell (2014) has continued the discussion by noting that *stance* in the sense of the interactional display of attitudes, positions and points of view, is “centrally implicated in the human form of intersubjectivity” (Sidnell 2014: 369). This is because being able to interpret what the other participant is doing requires recognition of the stance they adopt toward the current focus of interaction. Stance can make a difference between actions (e.g. whether something is heard as a question or accusation), but stancetaking is also an integral part of how interactants position themselves and others and calibrate their respective alignments and relationships in semiotic encounters (Du Bois 2007; Jaffe 2009). I regard address inversion as an interactional resource for

stancetaking that is a part of the more culture-specific architecture of intersubjectivity.

3 Data

The excerpts analyzed in this paper come from material collected during two and a half months of fieldwork in three different schools in Palestinian Territories in 2013. On the very first day of participating in the classroom activities, I noticed this address practice, which was analogous to mirror-like address in family settings, yet one that had not been reported in institutional settings before. I started to keep a record of the occurrences, and subsequently focused my analysis on recordings that I knew to contain at least some instances of inverted address.

For the purposes of studying address inversion, I have examined more closely approximately 9 hours of video-recorded classroom interaction of a corpus of 52 hours of material from grades 2 to 12 (ages 7–17). The selection covers grades 5 to 7 (ages 10–12), and it includes both regular Arabic lessons and tryouts for an annual Arabic contest. By examining approximately 9 hours of material, I accumulated a collection of 150 recorded instances of mirror-like address. These recorded instances come from 4 different teachers out of the approximately 15 teachers that participated in the analyzed occasions.

As a routinized address practice, address inversion is interlinked with the addressee's age. In producing a mirror-like address, the speaker positions herself as senior with respect to the addressee, and in so doing, easily positions the addressee as a child. Because of this indexical potential, address inversion is usually deployed with addressees that have not yet reached teenage. There are no strict age limits in this sense, but in my data the age of 12–13 marked a boundary after which inverted address became rare in the classroom context (cf. Ayoub 1964: 1106). The absence of the phenomenon in the data collected in the lower grades, however, is a matter of coincidence. Mirror-like address is a resource that only some of the teachers deployed more frequently, and for those teachers that participated in the study from grades 2–4, it did not happen to be part of their everyday classroom repertoires. During my fieldwork, however, I encountered instances where the addressees were younger students.

4 Address Inversion in Classroom Interaction

Earlier research on address inversion identifies it as a very “stance-saturated” (Jaffe 2009: 3) interactional resource. In family settings, mirror-like address is described as a means for displaying affective stances, both affection and exasperation, especially in situations where an adult admonishes the child or requests her to do something. However, although

inverted address practice in the school setting is lexico-semantically analogical to that in the family context, it needs to be studied in its own right. Educational settings differ from family contexts, for instance, in terms of their configuration (e.g. typically multiparty interaction), their institutionally set goals, setting-specific activities, and the degree of intimacy of interpersonal relationships (see also Cekaite & Ekström 2019). These features also shape the ways in which address inversion is deployed in the school context.

With the examples chosen in this chapter, I will show some general trends found in the data. I will proceed from setting-specific practices to those instances where mirror-like address in the school settings resembles that in family contexts. With video-recorded material, it is possible to study in a more detailed way how the participants construct actions where address inversion is deployed. I will focus on how the placement of address inversion influences the interpretation of mirror-like address in its particular context. Inverted address is examined with respect to the position of the address terms within the turn constructional unit (TCU), the position of the turn containing the address inversion in a sequence, and its placement within a possible larger activity.

Earlier research on address terms has found that the function and semiotic contribution of address terms depends on their position within the turn. It has been found (e.g. Lerner 2003) that pre-positioned address terms attract the attention of the addressee and function to implicate the

directionality of talk, while post-positioned terms are found to demonstrate a particular stance towards the addressee. In Arabic-medium classroom interaction, mirror-like addresses do occur both pre- and post-positioned in the turn constructional unit, and there is a difference between these uses that roughly corresponds to the above distinction. Although address inversion is a means for stancetaking irrespective of its positioning because it displays an asymmetric relationship between the participants, in cases where inverted address is post-positioned, the speaker tends to align more with the co-participant than in the cases where the mirror-like address is pre-positioned. The construal of the pre-positioned mirror-like address forms, however, further depend on the action environment.

4.1 Address Inversion in Initial Action

Let us start by looking at some cases in which the address inversion is located at the beginning of the first TCU of a turn that occupies an initial position of a sequence. In the text from now on, teachers are marked with the title *miss* 'miss' or *ustāz* 'teacher' followed by their first name pseudonyms. This is the way teachers are often referred to in the school context. In addressing their teachers, students often use only the title *miss* 'miss' or *ustāz* 'teacher.' The titles, either with or without the first name, are also used when teachers address each other.

I will first discuss two excerpts where inverted address is deployed to address several students. In the previous literature on address inversion, the practice is always described as a feature where there is only one addressee, but in my school data, roughly a third of the instances are directed at multiple addressees. This speaks for the powerful role of both embodied actions and the position of the speaker, and co-occurring signs in the utterance containing the address, not just single address terms, in establishing reciprocity in multiparty interaction. The other co-occurring linguistic signs are important in interpreting instances of mirror-like address, but also the speaker's gaze, gestures, posture and manner of using voice are often sufficient in interpreting who is addressed at any particular point in time.

The first excerpt is from the Arabic language contest data. Arabic language contests were an annual tradition, in which 5–7 graders (ages 10–12) from different schools competed with each other in Arabic grammar and oral expression. The following excerpt (1) is from a grammar contest tryout with seventh graders. The tryout is about to end in a situation where there are too many contestants that have qualified for the semifinals. Just prior to this excerpt, Miss Mona, who coordinates the contests, and Miss Nisrin, the Arabic teacher of this class, have been discussing how to handle the situation. Miss Mona then walks from the corner of the classroom to center front (line 1), and then faces the students and addresses them with the inverted address term *miss* (line 4 and Figure 1). Miss Nisrin is seated in the

right-hand corner of the classroom and faces the classroom as well (Figure 1).

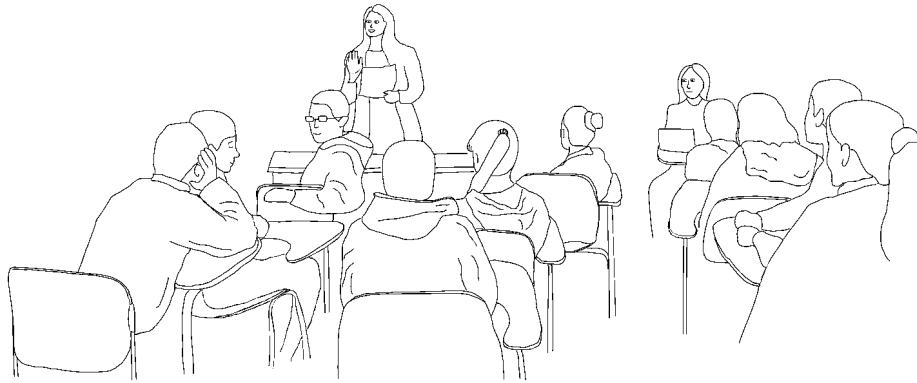


Figure 1.

Excerpt 1

- 01 MON: * °yalla.° *
 come on
Let's get going.
 mon *walks and faces the class*
- 02 NIS: *° () la-s-sādes? °
 to-DEF-sixth
 () to sixth ((grade))?
 mon * turns her head and gaze to Miss Nisrin
- 03 MON: °la-s-sādes. °*
 to-DEF-sixth
To sixth ((grade)).
 mon ----->*
- 04 MON=> *#miss fī 'indna (.) tna'ašar (.) wāhad.
 miss there is with:1PL twelve one
Miss we have twelve ((students)).
 mon *faces the class ---->
 fig. #fig.1
- 05 'an ġadd il-munāfase 'ālye bēnkom.
 seriously DEF-competition high among:2PL
Seriously the competition among you is fierce

- 06 **biddna nfakker bi-t-tari'a kif**
 want:1PL we think in-DEF-way how
We need to think of a way how
- 07 **minṣoffkom la-tamānye, la'inno ihna**
 we classify:2PL to-eight because we
we sort you.PL out to eight, because
- 08 **biddna tamānye. šukran 'ilkom,**
 want:1PL eight thank you to:2PL
we want eight. Thank you,
- 09 **'an ḡadd mumayyazīn bi-l-qawā'ed.**
 seriously excellent:PL in-DEF-grammar
believe me, you are excellent in grammar.
- 10 **u-minlā'i tari'a kif minwaṣṣelkom**
 and-we find way how we bring:2PL
And we will find a way to bring you
- 11 **la-tamānye ana u-miss Nisrīn,**
 to-eight I and-miss Nisrīn
to eight, I and miss Nisrīn,
- 12 **u-miss Nisrīn biṭḥabber 'anha.**
 and-miss Nisrīn she informs about:it
and miss Nisrīn will inform about it.
- 13 **šukran 'ilkom.**
 thank you to:2PL
Thank you.

From line 4 forward, Miss Mona addresses the whole class. This is evident from the embodied means she utilizes: she faces the students and addresses the class with an audible voice typical for teaching situations (e.g. loud voice, clear articulation, unhurried pace). The linguistic signs in her turn point in a similar direction. Miss Mona depicts an inclusive 'we' that includes her and Miss Nisrin (e.g. *indna* 'we have', line 4) and a plural 'you' that comprises the students (e.g. *bēnkom* 'among you pl.', line 5). The students are referred to with second person plural deictic elements throughout the turn, except for the singular, inverted *miss*.

I suggest that in these cases, the mirror-like address *miss* provides a distributive resource for addressing, a resource that addresses each of the multiple recipients individually and provides the teacher with an opportunity to take an individualizing stance towards the addressees.

This example also illustrates the stance-saturatedness of address inversion. In family settings, mirror-like address has been linked to displaying mostly positive and negative affective stances, but my analyses suggest that inverted address is a more multifaceted device for positioning oneself and the other. First of all, the distributive address cannot be placed on the continuum of affect although it is a way of positioning the addressee. Secondly, on some occasions, inverted address simultaneously plays a role in positioning the participants in more than one way.

The use of TCU-initial address terms has been described as “shift-implicative” (Rendle-Short 2007), helping to manage turn and topic transitions (Lerner 2003; Rendle-Short 2007), and enabling turns to stand out from their background (Clayman 2010). This is also what inverted *miss* does in this particular example. In the classroom data, a pre-positioned mirror-like address often occurs when the speaker moves from one activity to another, from one participation framework to another, and when wanting to mark the stretch of talk as particularly relevant. In the example above, the inverted *miss* is located at a point where there are two simultaneous transitions, as Miss Mona moves from a dyadic, rather private conversation with Miss Nisrin (up to line 3) to address the whole class with a turn that

ends the classroom situation (lines 4–13). In this case, these transitions are also displayed with embodied means.

In the data on the tryouts for the annual Arabic contest these types of slightly longer openings and closings prefaced by a mirror-like address do occur several times. However, the shift-implicative use of address inversion is not limited to occasions where the teacher addresses the whole group.

In the excerpt above, the inverted *miss* also can also be seen as a resource with which the speaker orients to the potentially sensitive ensuing action. Miss Mona is about to inform the students of the problematic outcome of the tryout: four more students need to be eliminated before the semifinals. In Arabic-medium family interaction, address inversion has been reported to mitigate parental disciplinary moves and asserting one's authority over the child (Yassin 1977: 300–301). In my classroom data, the spectrum of delicate environments where inverted address can be deployed is, however, broader (see next section for more cases of these environments). In this excerpt, inverted *miss* is one of the devices with which Miss Mona exhibits a stance toward what is being said as something delicate. Her TCU on line 4, *miss fī 'indna (.) tna 'ašar (.) wāḥad* 'miss we have twelve ((students))' is a rather indirect way of saying that the group of qualified students is still too large for the semifinals. In addition to this, Miss Mona slightly delays the production of each of the words in *tna 'ašar wāḥad* 'twelve ((students))'. Both indirectness and various delaying

practices have been identified as means to mark a stretch of speech as delicate (Lerner 2013).

The next excerpt further illustrates how address inversion contributes to stancetaking. The excerpt is from the very beginning of the semifinals, where the school representatives are chosen. All the fifth to seventh graders are present at the assembly hall with their teachers and are waiting for the coordinators of the contest to arrive. Some of the students are preparing for the contest and others are chatting with their classmates, and the noise in the hall is considerable. There are also five teachers present who help their students and occasionally maintain order locally.

One of the teachers, Miss Lu'lu', who is standing on the left side of the hall, takes the floor and addresses the group (line 1) with inverted *miss*. The other teacher participating in the situation is Ustāz Mustafa. He is standing in front of the first row of tables (Figure 2). In the following figure, Miss Lu'lu is standing outside the picture on the left. The participants in the picture are looking at her.



Figure 2.

Excerpt 2

01 LUL:=>a::, miss, ma'a lēš aḥki šaḡl[e#
miss never mind I say thing
Miss why don't I say something

fig

fig. 2

02 STU: [ā, ʔafaddali miss
yeah please:F miss
Yeah please miss.

03 MUS: ʔ-ʔullāb, HELOU, HEEI, ŠŌTAK.
DEF-students voice your:M.SG
Students, hello, hey, your voice!

04 WALA KILMA HALḤĪN, WALA KILMA,
not even word now not even word
Not even a word now, not even a word!

05 () BARRA
outside
() outside!

06 LUL:=> miss, iḥna lāzem minqaddem da'em kāmēl
miss we must offer support full
Miss we must offer our full support

07 la ʔullābna illi bimattlu šūfna

to students:our that represent classes:our
to our students that represent our classes

- 08 **lamma yiṭla‘u hunāk.**
when they go out there
when they go out there.
- 09 **b-inno m- ‘iḥna ma nšaddedhom,**
sinc(e)- we NEG we support them
Sinc- we do not support them
- 10 **kīf ma nšaddedhom ()?**
how NEG we support them
How we do not support them ()?’
- 11 **STU: niḥki**
we speak
By speaking.

Miss Lu’lu’s tries to establish the attention of the students with a summons that consists of an inverted *miss* followed by *ma ‘a lēš aḥki šagle* ‘why don’t I say something’ (line 1). While some of the students in the two front rows turn their bodies and gaze at Miss Lu’lu’ and start to listen (Figure 2), the summons gets treated by some of the nearby students as a request for permission to speak that needs a verbal answer. Their response, *ā tafadḍali miss* ‘yeah please Miss’ (line 2) creates even more unrest. At this point, Ustāz Mustafa, one of the other teachers, steps in to calm the situation down using somewhat more forceful means. He produces a series of summonses (address form *ṭullāb* ‘students’, *helou, heei*) each of which is produced with increased volume. These are followed by a series of directives (*šōtak* ‘your SG voice’ and a repeated *wala kilma* ‘not a word’) that are upgraded (Craven & Potter 2010) into a threat that includes a sanction of being put out of the assembly hall (lines 3–5). Ustāz Mustafa’s gaze sweeps around the assembly hall indicating that he is addressing all the

students. When the audience has quietened down, Miss Lu'lu' resumes by producing a sequence where she reminds the students of proper behavior during the contest. Again, this sequence is prefaced by an inverted *miss* (line 6).

In this excerpt, Miss Lu'lu's summons turn *miss ma 'a lēš aḥki šaḡle* 'miss why don't I say something' (line 1) initiates a presequence. This is also how the students treat the turn: as the first pair part of a summons-answer sequence that seeks the attention of the recipients. Presequences are deployed to introduce a conversational action and summonses project further talk from the part of the initiator. In this case, the further talk is a directive, socializing move by Miss Lu'lu.⁴ The inverted address in Miss Lu'lu's summons turn is an example of a shift implicative inverted address: there is a transition from various ongoing activities to a common focus. Also, the latter inverted *miss* on line 6 functions in this way. In the school data, inverted address is often deployed when the teacher returns to a common task after some type of interruption in common focus.

It needs to be noted as well that in the excerpt above, mirror-like address is not the only address practice that co-textually contributes to stancetaking. In addition to the distributive mirror-like *miss*, Miss Lu'Lu' deploys a pseudo-inclusive *we* (Haverkate 1992; Wilson 2019) to address

⁴ The summons *miss ma 'a lēš aḥki šaḡle* 'miss why don't I say something' appears in my data a few times and every time it is followed by a corrective, directive turn by the teacher. It is possible that in the school context this particular summons projects a more specific kind of following action.

the students (lines 6–10). This kind of *we* that does not actually include the speaker is often encountered in asymmetric situations, where the speaker holds an upper hand with respect to the addressee. Typical contexts include child-oriented speech especially in directive forms of interaction (Haverkate 1992) but can also be encountered in leadership talk (Wilson 2019).

Haverkate identifies pseudo-inclusive *we* as a mitigating device that softens directives and assertions while having also the potential to simultaneously index authority – just like mirror-like address. Wilson (2019: 52) notes that by using the pseudo inclusive *we* the speaker positions herself with the addressee, thus enabling the presentation of direct criticism. In the example above, Miss Lu’lu’ regiments the student’s behavior while simultaneously effacing her own role in doing so.

4.2 Address Inversion in Responsive Actions

Next, I will discuss address inversion in responsive actions. In classroom interaction, mirror-like address is often deployed in directives, admonitions and disagreements with which the speaker responds to some previous action of the co-participant(s). This line of discussion closely ties in with research on discourse practices in family contexts. Research on parental politeness and parents’ directives (e.g. Pauletto, Aronson & Galeano 2017) has shown that address terms, especially ones that stereotypically index positive affect, are often part of parents’ disciplinary moves. In these contexts, address

terms are said to function as *mitigating* devices (Fraser 1980; Blum-Kulka 1990), resources that soften potentially sensitive actions, such as asserting one's authority over someone. I will examine mirror-like address as a means of stancetaking with which the speaker can either align or disalign with the co-participants' previous action.

In responsive actions, the semiotic contribution of mirror-like address depends on its sequential position in the TCU. When the inversed address term is post-positioned in the TCU, the empathetic stance is more pronounced, whereas pre-positioned address inversions often go together with disaligning actions and with more assertive directives, admonitions and also disagreements. This differs from the functions of a pre-positioned inversed address term in initial actions. We saw in the previous section that a pre-positioned inversed address term address often indicates some type of shift or transition, and these instances are usually not marked. This is probably because in initiating a new action an element that attracts the attention of the recipient can be expected. In responsive actions, however, the contact between the participants is already there, and a similarly positioned address inversion may more easily display some type of trouble in interaction. In so doing it may cause a shift in the line of interaction.

I will first illustrate the tendencies in responsive actions with three excerpts from a grammar competition tryout with seventh graders. The grammar contests were organized around oral multiple-choice questions that the students needed to answer orally in front of the other contestants.

Seventh graders have already participated in these competitions twice before and in this particular tryout, Miss Mona repeatedly holds the students accountable for not following the local norms for these events, to patiently listen until the question has been read twice before attempting an answer. In each of the examples, the student produces his or her answer prematurely. In the following two extracts, the address inversion is post-positioned. In Excerpt 3 Miss Mona interacts with Faisal and in Excerpt 4 with Maysa.

Excerpt 3

- 01 FAI: **ḥāl**
A circumstantial adverb.
- 02 MON:=> **mā kammalt-eš miss**
 NEG I finished-NEG miss
I did not finish miss
- 03 **la', miš ḥāl.**
 no NEG circumstantial adverb
no, it's not a circumstantial adverb.

Excerpt 4

- 01 MAY: **lafif mafrūq ()**
A verb where the 1st and 3rd radicals are weak ().
- 02 MON:=> **hū saḥḥ bass stanni miss.**
 he correct but wait:IMP miss
It is correct but wait miss.
- 03 MAY: **fakkart inno ḥallasti.**
 I thought that you finished:F.SG
I thought that you had finished.
- 04 MON: **la' ba'ido marrtēn. aḥsan.**
 no I repeat:it two times better
No, I repeat it twice, (it's) better.

Both of these excerpts are instances of admonition. In Excerpt 4, this can also be seen in the recipient's response when on line 3 Maysa produces an account of her behavior. However, the semiotic effect of the post-positioned inverted address in the two excerpts is different. This is because the semiotic contribution of these admonitions is not only dependent on the position of the address term in the TCU, but also on the position of the admonition in the multi-unit and multi-action turn.

In Excerpt 3 after Faisal's answer, the expected action for Miss Mona to take would be to evaluate the answer, but instead, she orients to Faisal's breach and admonishes him for not waiting until she had finished reading the question. Although the admonition itself is relatively mild, producing it as the first response, before evaluating the question, gives it more prominence. However, when in example 4 Miss Mona first evaluates Maysa's answer and only then reproaches her, the reproach does not interfere with the completion of the initiation-response-evaluation (IRE) instructional sequence (Mehan 1979). The positioning of the admonition also provides Maysa with a natural sequential position to produce an account of her behavior.⁵

In comparison, initially positioned address inversion often renders directives and admonitions more assertive and indicates a more intense need

⁵ Although here the right answer is evaluated before the addressee is admonished, this is not a consistent pattern in the data.

for calibrating perspectives. The next example is from the same tryout a few minutes after the previous ones when Miss Mona interacts with Ibrahīm. Miss Nisrin also joins the discussion. She is seated in the front of the classroom and is not visible in the following figure.



Figure 3.

Excerpt 5

- 01 IBR: **mabnī ‘ala l-fatḥ**
 built on DEF-fatḥ
Built on the fatḥ.
- 02 MON:=> ***fmiss mā kammalt-ešf*#**
 miss NEG I finished-NEG
Miss I did not finish.
- mon *.....*---fingertips together and
 fig #fig. 3
- 03 NIS: **MĀ KAMMALT-EŠ** [mā kammalat is-s-]
 NEG I finished-NEGNEG she finished DEF-
I did not finish. She did not finish the q-
- 04 MON: [ma kammalt is-su’āl](.)

NEG I finished DEF-question
I did not finish the question.

mon ---moves hand back and forth iteratively ----->

05 => **miss,** *
Miss.

mon -----*

06 IBR: **saḥḥ kānat**
correct it was
It was correct.

07 MON: ***huwa saḥḥ ya'ni**
he correct I suppose
He is right I suppose.

mon *looks at Miss Nisrin --->

08 NIS: **huwa lāzem ikūn 'indo ṣaber**
he must is with him patience
He must have patience.

mon ----- gaze to Miss Nisrin ----->

09 MON: **IL-KULL [la'inno il-muṣābaqa mniḥsar]***
DEF-all because DEF-contest suffers
Everyone ((should)). Because the contest suffers.

mon ----- gaze to Miss Nisrin -----*

10 IBR: [()]

11 MON: ***ṭayyeb, tafaddal.**
fine please
Fine, please (sit down).

mon * quick glance to ibr followed by a wave of hand

This instance is the culmination point of Miss Mona's growing frustration with the student's noncompliance for not listening until she has finished reading the question. Miss Mona has already reprimanded students on six previous occasions during this lesson. Again, she produces her admonition right after Ibrahīm's answer and thereby delays the evaluation. This time the admonition is upgraded with a pre-positioned *miss* (line 2) that is produced with a smile and a culturally recognizable gesture asking for patience. Miss Nisrin joins in by producing an almost identical reprimand *mā kammalt-eš* 'I did not finish' in the 1st person singular in a relatively

loud voice (line 3). She immediately starts a self-repair that corrects the subject to the 3rd person feminine singular (*she* did not finish), while Miss Mona reclaims her right to speak by repeating her admonition, now without the inverted *miss* (line 4). Inverted miss, however, is produced once more as a separate admonition accompanied by a more intense hand gesture that lasts beyond the verbal utterance (line 5). Ibrahīm tries to account for his action by noting that the answer was correct (line 6). The reprimanding, however, continues with verbal complaints of impatience. Miss Nisrin first complains about Ibrahīm's lack of patience using a 3rd person singular personal deictics (line 8), but Miss Mona reframes impatience as the qualifying feature of the whole class (line 9). It takes another protest from Ibrahīm (line 10) before Miss Mona accepts his answer and grants him permission to sit down (line 11). After this incident, the rest of the competition unfolds without similar transgressions.

The semiotic effect of the admonishment is a result of all the deployed resources, not just the mirror-like address term or the linguistic content. The semiotic act is a composite of the linguistic act and the accompanying facial expressions, voice quality, prosody, gestures, embodied action and physical place of the participants. All these affect the interpretation of a particular action. A directive or an admonishment could be heard as more aggravated if, for instance, the speaker moves towards the recipient during the directive, gazes at the recipient intently or utters the possible address form particularly energetically.

In this particular case, the admonitions are produced with a slightly louder voice but, in the case of Miss Mona's first reproach on line 2, also with a smile (indicated with the £ signs at the beginning and end of the turn). In addition to this, Miss Mona produces a culturally widespread and easily recognizable Middle Eastern hand gesture where all her fingertips touch together while she holds her hand out. This gesture, which is deployed to demand patience from the co-participant, reaches its apex at the end of the first verbal admonishment (line 2) and continues with Miss Mona moving her hand repeatedly back and forth slightly beyond the last inverted *miss* (line 5).⁶

This example illustrates how various modulation devices ranging from mitigation to aggravation are deployed for complex semiotic effects (see also Galeano and Fasulo 2009 on modulating directives in family conversations). Miss Mona's smiley voice (line 2) can be interpreted as a means that mitigates the overall effect of the admonishment, while the pre-positioned address inversion intensifies it. The hand gesture also has a similar aggravating effect. Even as a relatively quick gesture that includes only one forwards movement with one's hand, the gesture easily indicates frustration. In this example, Miss Mona prolongs releasing the gesture and punctuates her admonitions on lines 4 and 5 by rhythmically moving her

⁶ The gesture deployed by Miss Mona is in a form very similar to what Kendon (1995) describes as *Mano a borsa* ('purse hand') encountered in southern Italian interaction. Despite their formal similarities, there is a functional difference: *Mano a borsa* indicates a question while in the Middle East the gesture demands patience from the co-participant.

closed fingers back and forth. The gesture is released only after the post-positioned inverted *miss* on line 5, making it a very explicit and intensive complaint about the lack of patience by the student.

The last example of directives is from the first round of Arabic grammar contest tryouts with fifth graders in one of the schools. Miss Mona interacts here with a boy named Butrus and again, the interactants are focusing on orally presented multiple-choice questions. The sequence illustrates a case where directives together with post-positioned inverted address terms (lines 4, 8, 13) are deployed to align affectively with the student. Miss Mona is standing in the front of the class and Miss Nisrin sits in the front on the left. She is not visible in the illustration.



Figure 4.

Excerpt 6

01 MON: il-fi 'el hāğara.

- DEF-verb he emigrated
The verb he emigrated.
- 02 **BUT:** **hāğara?**
 he emigrated
He emigrated?
- 03 **MON:** **hāğara.**
 he emigrated
He emigrated,
- 04 => **ħuṭṭo bi-ğumle miss. hal huwwa**
 put:M.SG:it in-sentence miss INT he
put it in a sentence miss. Is it a
- 05 **fi‘el muta‘addin, fi‘el lāzem,**
transitive verb, intransitive verb,
- 06 **fi‘el muḍāri‘.**
present tense verb.
- 07 **BUT:** **hāğara huwwa-**
 he emigrated he
To emigrate it is-
- 08 **MON:=>** **ħuṭṭo bi-ğumle miss, kamān marra.**
 put-it in-sentence miss more time
Put it in a sentence, miss one more time.
- 09 **hāğara, hal huwwa**
 he emigrated INT he
To emigrate, is it
- 10 **fi‘el lāzem, fi‘el muta‘ddin,**
intransitive , transitive verb,
- 11 **fi‘el māḍin.**
past tense verb.
- 12 **BUT:** **fi‘el lāzem.**
 Intransitive verb.
- 13 **MON:=>** **la’ miss.**
No miss.

Miss Mona introduces the question by first giving the focus word *hāğara* ‘he emigrated’ and asking Butrus to give its grammatical analysis (line 1). Butrus then initiates a repair by repeating the verb with a slightly shaky voice and rising intonation (line 2). On line 3, Miss Mona confirms

Butrus' understanding by repeating the focus verb and orients to his possible trouble in answering the question by producing the instruction *ħuṭṭo bi-ğumle miss* 'put it in a sentence miss' before reading the rest of the question (line 4). Once Miss Mona has read the question for the first time, Butrus starts to search for an answer (line 7). Miss Mona treats that as premature and as a misconduct by repeating her earlier instruction to analyze the verb with the help of an invented sentence and with *kamān marra* 'one more time', directs Butrus' attention to the chance of hearing the question again (line 8).

In this example, the directive *ħuṭṭo bi-ğumle miss* 'put it in a sentence miss' functions as a piece of advice or an instruction. In these types of cases, the post-positioned mirror-like address indicates the speaker's alignment with the addressee. The instructions, presented as a part of the directive-response sequence, produce a slight change of footing where, instead of the official agenda and the whole class, the teacher orients to the single student and his potential trouble in answering the question. Butrus' repair initiation and vocal behavior can be interpreted as displaying nervousness, and with her directives, Miss Mona not only provides practical advice on how to proceed with the question but also attends to the addressee on a more empathetic level. Miss Mona's exchange with Butrus also provides an example of a negative evaluation with a TCU final inverted address (line 13). In these *la' miss* responses, that are fairly common in the Arabic

grammar tryouts, the inverted address functions in a similar manner as in the previous instructions on lines 4 and 8 as a sign of empathetic alignment.

Inverted address also occurs in situations when the teacher disaligns with the students' understandings. The following excerpt is an example of a pronounced disagreement. The example is from Miss Dalia's Arabic lesson with sixth graders. In the last ten minutes of the lesson, she leads the students into a free-flowing discussion on shooting stars. The students are offering various longish explanations for their origin, as one of the boys, Aḥmad, addresses Miss Dalia and complains that the explanation just offered by Adīb is incorrect.

Excerpt 7

- 01 AHM: miss () illi 'āl adīb ġalaṭ
 miss that he said adīb incorrect
 Miss () that Adīb said is incorrect
- 02 DAL:=> miss darūri ti'rafu? la'
 miss right away you:PL know no
 Miss is it possible to know it right away? No.
- 03 => miss biddak itfatteš il-ma'lūm
 miss want:2.M.SG you investigate DEF-know
 Miss you need to investigate the fact.
- 04 u-tġibli iyyā.
 and-you bring me it
 and bring them to me.

Miss Dalia replies to Aḥmad's complaint by issuing him a question with a pre-positioned *miss*, *miss darūri ti'rafu?* 'miss is it possible to know right away?', and immediately proceeds to answer her own question with a

firm *la* 'no' (line 2). She then continues with a directive directed personally at Ahmad and assigns him to find information on shooting stars as homework (later given as homework for the whole class). In his research on disaligning actions, Clayman (2010, 2013) demonstrates that address terms that are prefatory to responsive actions recurrently launch responses that are more agentive or "initiating" than is normally the case. In other words, pre-positioned address terms are capable of redesigning the ensuing turn so that it appears as if it was an independent or first action. In the case of Miss Dalia's response, this is literally the case as she responds to Ahmad's complaint with a question.

5 Conclusion and Discussion

In this article, I have outlined a brief situated account of how inverted address is deployed in an Arabic-medium school context. In classroom interaction, mirror-like address is a flexible resource for stancetaking. It is a tropic resource that makes evident the asymmetric relationship between the participants and for this reason positions the participants in the social matrix of the classroom more markedly than regular address forms. At the same time, it retains its potential to display positive affect towards the addressee. Which side of this bi-polar meaning potential is activated more prominently at any given time depends crucially on the context.

Both the position of the inverted address term within the turn and its position within the sequence affects the interpretation. In the school context, prefatory inverted address is deployed in sequence-initiating actions. In these cases, the turns containing mirror-like address are often not that affectively charged. Rather, the mirror-like address signals moving to another activity or another participation framework. The examples analyzed in this article were located in closing the learning situation and transitioning into a longer socializing move by the teacher, but similar uses also occur in smaller transitions.

In responsive action environments, however, the mirror-like address was part of more affectively charged actions. Whether address inversion indexes a disaligning or empathetic stance depends on its position with respect to the TCU. Those mirror-like addresses that were deployed TCU initially often display a stance whereby the speaker disaligns with the addressee, whereas those address inversions appearing TCU finally aligned more with the other participants. These responsive actions included directives, admonitions and instructions but also cases where the teacher positions herself with respect to a previous stance expressed by the student. In these cases, the prefaced mirror-like address was often part of constructing assertive directives, admonitions and disagreements, whereas post-positioned address inversion indexed different degrees of empathy towards the co-participant. The analyses also illustrated that, for instance, in admonitions, the semiotic effect of address inversion further depends on its

position within a multi-unit and multi-action turn. However, although the sequentially organized architecture of intersubjectivity provides the matrix against which the semiotic contribution of address inversion is interpreted, the accompanying co-textual semiotic signs also play a crucial role. The analyses illustrated that address inversion can be one of the many devices with which, for instance, the semiotic effect of admonitions is modulated.

In the analyses, I also identified ways of deploying mirror-like address not reported in previous research on the subject. In the school setting, address inversion can be utilized to address multiple addressees. I argued that this enables the teacher to take a distributive stance towards the addressee and address the students as individuals. Especially this usage of mirror-like address is something that the other available address terms cannot accomplish.

The above-mentioned observations of how address inversion is deployed in the school settings are in many ways comparable to functions that the previous conversation analytic research has identified for address terms. This raises the question whether address inversion is in any way special compared to other forms of address. Even the bi-polar meaning potential does not seem to be unique to mirror-like address. For instance, research on parents' directive moves has reported that normal endearment terms have a similar Janus-faced nature (Pauletto et al. 2017) that enables them to be used for displaying both authority and alignment. My argument is that in address inversion these two sides are more prominently indexed

because stereotypically, it is an asymmetric address resource available only for the more senior interactional party. By deploying inverted address, the speaker constructs an asymmetry between the participants which is not automatically the case with terms of endearment. In my school data, terms of endearment are rarely used. In the 9 hours of data, there are only 5 tokens of different forms of *ḥabībi* ‘my dear’ against the 150 tokens of inverted *miss* or *ustāz*. The asymmetric *miss* or *ustāz* seems to better fit the normative expectancies of how affect is displayed in the institutional context of comprehensive school.

Other than that, there might be need to reconceptualize the indexical meaning potential of address practices – to what extent it is actually a result of more general affordances provided by the architecture of intersubjectivity (e.g. the capability of pre-positioned address turns to redesign the ensuing turns so that it appears as more independent) and to what extent their indexicality is community specific. In linguistic anthropological and conversation analytic research on address practices these two lines of research have been mostly separate.

To conclude, by functioning as a resource for stancetaking, address inversion also manages intersubjectivity. In classroom interaction, its typical contexts of deployment cluster around actions that are actively oriented towards the coordination of individual subjectivities. Mirror-like address enables the speakers to take stances to position themselves and their co-participants with respect to activities and participant frameworks. Address

inversion is also a stancetaking means for the speaker to align or disalign with their co-participants. Even when it is deployed to address multiple addressees, address inversion allows the teacher to address the students as individuals. Mirror-like address is a resource that as a part of the larger architecture of intersubjectivity, such as turn taking, organizes the moment by moment unfolding of interaction and fine-tunes its construal.

Note of Acknowledgement

This work was supported in part by grants from the Kone Foundation and the Finnish Cultural Foundation. I am also grateful to the teachers and students of the participating schools for letting me share their everyday activities. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Marja-Leena Sorjonen for her very useful suggestions and detailed comments on earlier versions of this article. Many thanks also go to Kaisa Hemminki for producing the illustrations in this chapter.

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