This article examines the current usage of terms of address in the Western Ukrainian variety of the Ukrainian language. It investigates the use of pronominal (і ті – intimate form; Ви – polite, distant form) and nominal forms of address (such as first name, father’s name, surname, title, pan/pani (Mr/Mrs), товтрысь (Comrade) etc.) in Western Ukrainian, as well as strategies to avoid direct address, through quantitative (questionnaires) and qualitative (oral discussion) data. The data were analysed using both descriptive and interpretive methods. A set of factors that determine address choice in Ukrainian was isolated and a model was developed which reflects the hierarchical relationships and mutual influences between these factors. The factors were divided into key factors (age, style of upbringing, personal value system, gender, and political convictions) and factors of interaction (relative age, relative status, setting, social distance, and kinship). Combining different address habits and the weight of pragmatic factors in the choice of address forms, the analysis demonstrates that two tendencies currently exist. Some people are traditionalists who adhere to fairly conservative patterns of address, whereas others are brought up more liberally and tend to have a more relaxed attitude towards the choice of address terms.

**INTRODUCTION**

This article examines the current usage of terms of address in the Western Ukrainian variety of Ukrainian. It presents some findings of my diploma thesis (Weissenböck 2005), which used an adapted version of the questionnaire and interview schedule developed for the project *Address in some western European languages* (see articles by Kretzenbacher et al., Norrby and Warren in this issue). The thesis investigated the use of pronominal and nominal forms of address in Western Ukrainian and described the variation and (to a lesser extent) changes within the Western Ukrainian address system, through the analysis of reported address patterns, rather than data on actual use. One of the main aims
was to develop a model of the hierarchical relationships and mutual dependencies among factors that determine address choice.

Although Ukraine is the largest country located entirely on the European continent, it remains relatively unknown in Europe. The Ukrainian language too receives comparatively little attention in the world compared, say, to Russian and Polish, even though it is spoken by over 40 million people.

**LANGUAGE VARIATION IN UKRAINIAN**

Historically, Ukraine has only over very short periods of time existed in its present territorial form. Until World War II, Western Ukraine was separated from Central and Eastern Ukraine. The Central and Eastern regions were part of the Russian Empire until 1918 when Soviet Ukraine (USSR) was formed, and in 1922 it became one of the republics of the Soviet Union. In contrast, Western Ukraine was successively subject to Lithuanian, Polish, Lithuanian-Polish and Austrian-Hungarian rule, until it was annexed by the Soviet Union during World War II (Kappeler 2000, 8f.).

Ukrainian, an East Slavic language, is characterised by significant linguistic variation. This tendency towards variation has historical roots, in that the language of the ruling state was always privileged, and Ukrainian suppressed. In the Soviet Union in the time of Stalin, for example, Ukrainian grammar and vocabulary were by law heavily assimilated to Russian (Oswald 2000, 34f). The principle was ‘the closer a language’s grammar is to Russian, the closer it comes to perfection’ (Alpatov 2000, 91, author’s translation). The legal status of the Ukrainian language and its actual position in society have in fact varied considerably as a result of the inclusion of its speakers in many different states and empires throughout history (Sevel’ov 1998, 11; Oswald 2000, 21–25, 36–40).

Furthermore, variation in Ukrainian is due to the fact that the language has been under heavy influence from other languages. In Western Ukraine, Polish had a large impact on the Ukrainian language; in Eastern and Central Ukraine, Russian played a similar role (Comrie 1981, 21ff). This is one of the reasons why the Western varieties of Ukrainian differ greatly from the Central- and East-Ukrainian varieties. In addition to Russian, English currently exerts a significant influence on Ukrainian in urban areas.

A final factor that promotes variation in Ukrainian is the lack of systematic and consistent standardisation of the language. The complex and not yet concluded process of developing a literary language is characterised by the difficult task of unifying language traditions from Western and Eastern and Central Ukraine. Ukrainian is regulated by an official norm, established in the Academic Grammar of the Ukrainian Language (Bilodid
1969/1972–73) and in the Academic Dictionary (Bilodid et al. 1970–80). However, the spoken language does not (any longer) conform to this norm.

**THE UKRAINIAN ADDRESS SYSTEM**

As illustrated in the following table, the pronominal system of address in Ukrainian is binary, similar to the French system (for an overview of the address system in Slavonic languages, see e.g. Stone 1977).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ukrainian</th>
<th>French</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Singular</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘less formal’ (T)</td>
<td>ty*</td>
<td>tu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘more formal’ (V)</td>
<td>Vy</td>
<td>vous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plural</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘less formal’ (T)</td>
<td>Vy</td>
<td>vous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘more formal’ (V)</td>
<td>Vy</td>
<td>vous</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*It is not possible to reproduce these pronominal forms using the Cyrillic alphabet.*

As in French, the 2nd person singular pronoun *ty* is used as an informal address form to a single person. *Vy*, the 2nd person plural pronoun serves as a formal address form to one person and as both a less and a more formal address form to a group of people.

The spectrum of nouns that can be used for nominal address is very wide (curly brackets indicate that these are optional forms):

- *pan*/*pani* (Mr/Mrs) + title {+ last name}
- *pan*/*pani* + last name
- *pan*/*pani* + first name
- first name + father’s name
- last name
- father’s name
- first name
- *pan*/*pani*
- *titkalvujko* (aunt/uncle) + first name
- *tovaryš* (Comrade) {+ last name}
- nouns such as *brate* (brother), *druže* (friend).
As a consequence of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the nominal address system of the Ukrainian language changed. The originally Polish form pan/pani (Mr/Mrs) was re-established as a widely used form of address in Western Ukraine. This change is not a drastic one, as in private use pan/pani has always existed. The custom of addressing somebody with his or her first name and patronymic became part of the Ukrainian language under Russian influence, where it had been serving as a formal form of nominal address from the 18th century (Berger 2003, 51). In Western Ukraine, use of first name and patronymic is strongly associated with Russian and Russia. This usage has decreased considerably in the last 15 years, but it is still deeply rooted in educational contexts (at school, university) and to some extent in work contexts. It is hardly surprising that the Soviet address form tovaryš (Comrade) lost ground in independent Ukraine and is only used in special settings (such as in the army), in an ironical, joking fashion.

**DATA AND METHODOLOGY**

In light of the above-mentioned facts about language variation within Ukrainian, the present empirical study was restricted to one variety of Ukrainian, the variety spoken in Western Ukraine. For the main survey, I selected L'viv, the urban centre of the Western region: the results therefore cannot be taken as representative of Western Ukraine as a whole.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Main Survey</th>
<th>Additional Survey (Address within the family)</th>
<th>Background Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interviews with students and people from their social networks</td>
<td>Survey among students</td>
<td>Interviews with ‘Experts’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of informants</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of data collection</td>
<td>L'viv (23) Drohobyc (1)</td>
<td>L'viv (Ivan Franko University)</td>
<td>L'viv (2) Kyjiv (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method of data collection</td>
<td>Questionnaire and interviews</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2 Data and methodology*

All data were collected from April to September 2004. The interviews with students that make up the empirical data of the main survey were conducted in L'viv and Drohobyc.¹
The interviews with experts (all of whom were university teachers) were conducted in Kyiv (Kiev) and L'viv and serve as background information to contextualise informants’ responses. The main survey concerns address in general. For this purpose, 24 interviews with students and people from their social network were conducted. Since the interview data on address within the family were unsatisfactory, as they gave no insights into why a certain form was chosen, an additional survey on the topic was carried out among 110 students.

The questionnaire used in the main survey was similar to that used by Clyne et al. (2004a) and included detailed questions about address habits in different situations and towards different people. In the interviews, questions were asked about general political and social attitudes and orientations of participants, about their opinions toward forms of address in general, and certain forms in particular. In order to adapt the questions to the Ukrainian context, minor adjustments were made, for example in the questionnaire, allowing informants to select patronymic alongside first name and surname, and to rank nominal forms of address from the least to the most formal. In addition, in the interviews, participants were asked their opinion of the forms tovaryš (Comrade) and pan/pani (Mr/Mrs).

Details on the 24 informants in the main survey are as follows:

• Average age: 33.9 years, ranging from 19 to 71
• 15 women and 9 men
• 23 had a university degree or were studying at university at the time of the study.

For the additional survey a short questionnaire was developed. It included questions about the origin of the participants and their parents, the period of time they had lived in L'viv, their way of addressing the parents and possible reasons for the choice of this address (e.g. family traditions, Ukrainian etiquette, personal value system). Details on the 110 informants in the additional survey are as follows:

• Age: ranging from 17 to 21 years
• All 110 informants were studying at university at the time of the study
• 54 informants (49.1%) were originally from the country, 56 informants (50.9%) from an urban area.
All interviews were carried out in Ukrainian; the quotes from the interviews below were translated into English for this article.

**INTERPRETING THE RESULTS**

There are a number of situations in which reciprocal V is the unmarked form of address. As a rule, V is used to:

- staff in the service sector
- staff in public authorities / police
- superiors and clients
- teachers at school and university
- friends of parents / grandparents
- parents of best friend
- parents of spouse / partner.

In contrast, there are only relatively few clear domains in which T is the unmarked form of address:

- among friends of the same age (who are from the younger generation)
- among young people in informal, youth oriented contexts (e.g. disco)
- in certain domains, e.g. the literary / art scene.

Apart from the clear V and T situations, there are situations that stand out because of a high level of variation. This is especially the case when addressing:

- colleagues at work
- family members
- young strangers.

It is perhaps going too far to speak of the existence of two systems – one with T, the other with V as the unmarked address form – as do Clyne et al. (2004b, 4) with regard to German. In Ukrainian, the V pronoun seems to be much more established as the unmarked form than the T pronoun. The more traditional system, allowing T only in very few situations, is in general rather stable.

To better understand the current address choices in Western Ukrainian, ten parameters were isolated as a result of data analysis. Five *key factors* were identified, that is, factors
that form part of the identity of an individual: the informant’s age, style of upbringing, personal value system, gender, and political convictions. Five factors of interaction were also identified, that is, factors that are determined by the context of an interaction and by the relation between the interlocutors: relative age, relative status, setting, level of social distance, kinship.3

These factors were then put into relation to one another in a model (see Figure 1). Within the model, the key factors can be ranked hierarchically, with the person’s age as the most important and political attitudes as the least important parameter. The ranking is based on how prominently a factor features in the informants’ responses to the interview questions. In contrast to the hierarchically ranked key factors, the importance of the factors of interaction is variable. The identity (key factors) of each speaker in the interaction will influence the relative importance of the factors of interaction.

Figure 1 Model of the factors in address choice

KEY FACTORS

Among the key factors, a person’s age is the factor that most strongly influences address choice in Western Ukraine. In communication between strangers, the transition from mutual T (usual among children/teenagers) to mutual V (normally used among adults) can happen quite early in Western Ukraine. When analysing the statements of university students, for example, there is considerable variation in their reported use of address forms towards other students whom they do not know (university students are generally quite young in the Ukraine, between 17 and 21/22 years.) Some said they would always use the V form when addressing strangers, whether they are students or not. Others reported that they would only use the T form, because they felt solidarity with fellow students.

The closely connected factors upbringing and value system were prominent parameters within the model. The family in Western Ukraine seems to be a much stronger structure
than in many Western European countries. Penishkevich (1996, 192f.) reports on studies in the field of pedagogy in the early 1990s dealing with family structure in Ukraine. These studies showed that Ukrainians consider the family as a kind of refuge, where traditions and values (such as the ancestors’ heritage, the concepts of honesty and conscience) are preserved and passed on to the following generations. Parents, grandparents as well as close relatives are a source of education.

The style of upbringing can be defined as the set of values and attitudes conveyed by the parents. It strongly forms the person’s value system. The evaluation of participants’ general attitudes and orientations was based on their responses to the interview questions sounding out their views on salient social and political issues. Since the style of upbringing and the person’s value system could only be determined in a general way, two basic sets of values were established: a traditional way of upbringing and a conservative value system, as opposed to a modern way of upbringing and a liberal value system. These two value systems are discussed below.

The results show that gender is an important parameter in Western Ukraine. In the group of people younger than 30, 92.9% said that they would address a stranger of the same age but the opposite sex using the V form. Towards strangers of the same age and the same sex, only 64.3% would use V. This tendency can be observed to a lesser degree when addressing younger strangers: 35.7% of the informants would use V towards younger people of the opposite sex; towards younger people of the same sex, 28.6% would use V. It appears, then, that among the younger generation, more liberal use of T is noticeable when addressing somebody of the same age and sex. In the older generations, as V is the only possibility with strangers, gender does not come into play.

**FACTORS OF INTERACTION**

The factors of interaction are relative age and relative status – both of which are straightforward concepts; the level of social distance, which can take the values low and high level of social distance and refers to the level of intimacy in a relationship; and setting, referring to either in the public or the private sphere.

Among the factors of interaction relative age seems to be the most important in Western Ukrainian. When asked how they would address a considerably older stranger to ask for directions, for example, all informants chose the V form (see Figure 2). A 24-year old university student explained this as follows:
It isn’t like in Western Europe here, where you can use τy even towards older people, if you have closer contact with them. Here, people rather use V́y.

In Western Ukraine, it seems that an age difference cannot be overcome easily; very often it cannot be overcome at all. A 40-year old university teacher describes this phenomenon as follows:

All the students that I have, I would prefer to say τy to them, because I have a very close relationship with them. But I just simply can’t do it because I know that they cannot change to τy with me any more.

A considerable age difference can lead to non-reciprocal use of pronouns of address, i.e. the older person uses the T form towards the younger one, while the younger one has to return V. Figure 2 shows that only around 60% of the informants expect reciprocity in interactions with older strangers (in this case reciprocity in V use). Accordingly, asymmetric pronoun use is widely accepted in Western Ukraine, especially if the age difference between the interlocutors is great.

![Addressing Strangers](image)

**Figure 2** Addressing strangers when asking for directions

Partly asymmetric address seems to be a specifically Ukrainian practice which consists of reciprocal use of pronouns of address (as a rule, V) and asymmetric use of nominal
terms of address. At university, for example, professors or lecturers are addressed with V and first name and patronymic by their students, and return V, but only use a student's first name.

From the data, this phenomenon can be easily verified: 97.1% of the informants stated that they would address superiors using V and 79.4% of them expected to be addressed in the same way. In contrast, only 20.6% of the informants expected reciprocal nominal address. While 79.4% of the informants reported addressing their superiors using first name and patronymic, only 14.7% expect to be addressed in the same way by their superiors (Weissenböck 2005, 108f.).

The interactional factor level of social distance is subject to a very high degree of variation and depends strongly on upbringing and value system: whereas some informants reported that a low level of social distance would always be a reason for T use (independent of age), for others a low level of social distance would not lead to T use, even within family or towards friends of the same age. As mentioned above, when a person is ‘traditionally’ oriented, even within the family V (the V of respect towards elders) is predomantly used. If the person’s orientation is ‘modern’, reciprocal T is used among (mostly young) people of the same age and within the family (towards parents and grandparents). It thus seems that the V form for people with a ‘modern’ orientation has lost a great deal of its meaning of respect and mainly serves to express distance.

TRADITIONAL ORIENTATION

A traditional way of upbringing and a conservative value system is characterised by a high esteem of old (Western) Ukrainian traditions, Ukrainian etiquette and the authority of older people (parents, grandparents, and older people in the neighbourhood). In Table 3 we see which factors of interaction are significant for a traditionally oriented person.

Among the factors of interaction, relative age, relative status and social distance are strong factors and lead to significant V use. Relative age and relative status lead to V use also within the family, so that parents and grandparents are always addressed with V. In such cases, we speak of the V of respect (in contrast to the V of distance). In communication among non-relatives, a public setting indicates compulsory use of V. A university professor, for example, can use the T form when addressing a student in a one-on-one talk. However, in a lecture or in front of other people, he or she will most likely use V. This phenomenon, which I call ‘pronoun-switching’, can also be encountered in groupings of people of approximately the same status who consider it inappropriate to reveal their personal relationship in front of others in a public setting.
A low level of social distance and kinship are weak factors and only in special cases can they lead to the use of T (e.g., among young people of the same age).

### Table 3 Factors of interaction: ‘traditionally’ oriented person

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strong factors in V choice</th>
<th>Weak factors in T choice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• relative age</td>
<td>• low level of social distance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• relative status</td>
<td>• kinship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• high level of social distance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• public setting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MODERN ORIENTATION

A modern upbringing or a liberal value system is above all characterised by the strong factors low level of social distance and kinship, which lead to significant T use (see Table 4). The factor of interaction public setting is weak. Relative age, relative status and social distance are still important factors, but they are less important than for ‘traditionally’ oriented people (marked ‘medium’ factors in Table 4). Characteristically the T form is predominant within the family. Some informants reported that they would never use V when addressing very close relatives, such as their parents or grandparents. The V form is consequently used to express social distance rather than respect. This clearly sets it apart from the traditionalist paradigm where the V form is used as a sign of respect for older family members and older people in general.

### Table 4 Factors of interaction: ‘liberally’ oriented person

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strong factors in T choice</th>
<th>Medium factors in V choice</th>
<th>Weak factors in V choice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• low level of social distance</td>
<td>• relative age</td>
<td>• public setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• kinship</td>
<td>• relative status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• high level of social distance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

At the beginning of the investigation it seemed that ‘everything goes’ within the family context: parents can be addressed using the T or the V form, one parent can receive T the other one V (with gender apparently not playing a role), one child can address the
parents using Vy the others using ty. In the course of data analysis, it became apparent that a complex arrangement of factors including origin, traditions of address within the family context, level of conscious adherence to Ukrainian etiquette and personal preferences determines address within the family context.

In addition, the investigation of address in the family revealed the existence of two possible meanings of the V pronoun – distance and respect. A ‘traditional’ way of upbringing is an indicator for V use within the family, that is towards parents and grandparents. Address use with other older relatives, such as aunts, uncles, and older cousins, was not subject to investigation, but from my own observation, it appears that Vy is used. That is why the use of V has to be seen as an expression of respect. Where traditional Ukrainian etiquette is not a central element of upbringing, that is, when a person has been brought up in a ‘modern’ way, intimacy (i.e. a low level of social distance) is often a reason for the use of T within the family. In this case, V is an expression of distance. Of course the two meanings of the V pronoun do not exclude each other, but ‘liberally’ oriented people tend to feel distance when using Vy, ‘traditionally’ oriented people tend to feel respect.

The additional survey complemented the results from the main survey. Both surveys showed similar proportions of T and V use with parents: the main survey showed 66.7% of the informants reported addressing their parents with T, and 33.3% reported using V; the additional survey showed T use at 67.3% and V use at 32.7%. Of note in the additional survey results is the fact that more people from the country use V when addressing their parents than from town (25 informants from the country vs. 11 from town). Statistical analysis shows that there is a significant correlation between origin and address (results of a Chi squared test according to Pearson and a 4 fields Chi squared test: phi=0.259, p=0.007).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Town</td>
<td>Country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 Additional survey: T and V use with parents, town versus country

Summing up the results, V correlates with the origin ‘country’ and can therefore be related to traditional address habits. In the countryside, it is generally agreed that old
Ukrainian traditions are more strictly adhered to than in cities. Therefore people from the country (or those whose parents have moved from the country to the city) are more likely to use Vy within the family. Address within the family therefore seems to be dependent on the origin of the family and on whether they observe traditions and pass them on to the next generation. One of the experts interviewed in this study observed that families of the young urban intelligentsia liked to return to old traditions and thus taught their children to use V towards their parents and grandparents, although this is probably the exception rather than the rule.

The results of the analysis overall demonstrate the complexity of address habits in Western Ukraine and their dependence on a multitude of factors. As in most other languages, address is characterised by a high level of variation. In the analysis of reported address usage in the surveys presented here, it has become clear that two distinct orientations, that of a traditionally oriented person and that of a liberally oriented person, have a great impact for an understanding of address choice in Western Ukraine.

ENDNOTES

1 Drohoby is a town about 100 km from L'viv. The informant from Drohoby studied and lived in L'viv for several years.

2 The survey was carried out anonymously, which is why no detailed information about the average age and the sex of the participants can be given.

3 It might be surprising that there appears to be no such parameter as solidarity or 'gemeinsame Lebenswelt' (perceived commonalities) as Clyne et. al. (2004b, 5) state, quoting Kallmeyer. Perceived commonalities between interlocutors can be determined by place of residence, job, employer, age, clothes, interests, social environment and 'Schicksalsgemeinschaft' (chance community), e.g. waiting together in a line (Clyne et. al. 2004b, 5). Solidarity was not introduced as separate factor, since informants never or very seldom mentioned situations in which solely a feeling of solidarity would lead to T use.

4 ‘Strong’, ‘weak’ and ‘medium’ factors in V (T) choice refer to factors that could (as a result of data analysis) be identified as, respectively, (i) generally leading to, (ii) generally not leading to, and (iii) sometimes leading to, V (T) choice.
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