

The Use of Address Terms by Thomas Shelby as the Main Character in *Peaky Blinders*

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ABSTRACT

This research seeks to study the use of address terms in a business talk. Address terms such as FN, LN, T, TLN, KT, PN, or Miscellaneous, are selectively used to address others depending on some social factors such as age, gender, social occasions, social relationship, family relationship, occupational hierarchy, as well as racial background. This research studies qualitatively the utterances of Thomas Shelby, the main character in *Peaky Blinders*. The findings show that Thomas Shelby only uses FN, TLN, and Miscellaneous, such as person deixis and zero address term. Therefore, in a business talk, a speaker may choose the use of appropriate terms of address in accordance with the social factors to maximize communication's purposes.

Keywords: Address terms and social factors; address terms in business talk; choice of address terms and social factors

INTRODUCTION

This study discusses the use of address terms used by Thomas Shelby as the main character in the British series, *Peaky Blinders*, especially when the main character talked about business to his interlocutors. The reasons for using address terms as the basis of the study were to show the use of address terms; whether all types of address terms were still mainly used by people, or whether they prefer to use one to three types of address terms, or other if any. Moreover, the writer wanted to find out whether the social factors in choosing the address terms were between the seven social factors which were explained below, or it may be other social factors.

I chose to analyze *Peaky Blinders*' main character because this series had received some awards, which were *RTS Programme Awards for Best Drama Series* (2014), *British Screenwriters' Awards for Best British TV Drama Writing - Steven Knight* (2016), *Bafta Television Awards for Best Drama Series* (2018), and *TV Choice Awards for Best Drama Series* (2018) (*Peaky Blinders*, n.d.). From 2019 until 2020, *Peaky Blinders* received other awards, which were *National Television Awards for Best Drama* (2019 & 2020) and *Most Popular Returning Drama* (2019, 2020, & 2022), and *NME Awards for Best TV Series* (2020) (*Peaky Blinders*, n.d.).

METHODS

I used a qualitative approach in conducting this study. I took the data from the Netflix series, season three of *Peaky Blinders*. The data was analyzed using the theories of address term by Holmes (2013) and Wardhaugh (2006) to be supplemented by the notion of zero address terms from Ervin-Tripp (1969).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, I present the types of address terms and social factors that influence Thomas in choosing the address terms.

Types of Address Terms According to the Existing Theory of Address Terms

A. First Name and Family Relationships

Michael : Up slightly. There's also been a threefold increase in donations to the Shelby Foundation charity. The counsellor suggested naming the new school "The Grace Shelby Institute."

Thomas : Tell the counsellor the name "Grace Shelby Institute" is acceptable to us. This is a list on the other things I want doing. That's all. (3.2)

Polly : Tommy.

Thomas : That's all, **Pol**. Well done, both of you. (3.3)

Arthur : Right, let's go.

In Datum 3.3, Thomas, Michael, Arthur, and Polly were talking about the name of the Shelby Foundation charity. This foundation was run by Shelby's company, their family business. Therefore, they were talking about the best name for the foundation under their company. Thomas, as the leader of Shelby Co. Ltd., was the one who was in charge of making the decision about it. Michael, Arthur, and Polly were Thomas' family members and his subordinates, so they asked Thomas about the name of the foundation. Thomas gave the answer. Then, Thomas wanted to stop the meeting. At first, they did not really hear Thomas stop the meeting. Thus, Thomas emphasized his message in stopping the meeting by using FN when he called Polly, his mother.

In Western communities, it is common to use FN to address family members. However, in this situation, Thomas was not in a good mood or condition to talk more about business stuff. Therefore, the intention behind Thomas' use of FN was that he was not in good mood. In other words, Thomas gave a serious order to stop the meeting and indirectly asked them to go out from his room.

B. First Name and Social Status and Distance

Datum 4.43

Thomas : £150,000. Cash, diamonds and sapphires. So that's 20 for you, **Charlie. Isaiah**, there's 5 to you. The rest we take to America to invest in legally-acquired property. Assets bought with untraceable income resold, and the profits reinvested to make sure it's clean. (4.43)

Arthur : And after that, I suppose, the whole business will be like that stag hanging up over there, right, Tom?

In Datum 4.43, Thomas was talking with his subordinates, Charlie, Isaiah, and Arthur. In this situation, Thomas gave information about the benefits in their business. To be specific, Thomas informed Charlie and Isaiah about their salaries. Then, Thomas gave the information about the other benefits. The business talk was shown in "£150,000. Cash, diamonds and sapphires. So that's 20 for you, **Charlie. Isaiah**, there's 5 to you. The rest we take to America to invest in legally acquired

property. Assets bought with untraceable income resold, and the profits reinvested to make sure it's clean.”

In this business talk, Thomas used FN to call his subordinates. It is common to use FN to call someone who has lower social status without minding the social distance. Thomas used FN to call his subordinates as the formal address term for him to call the subordinates. Then, Thomas used FN to call his subordinate because he gave specific information to each person. Thomas was in a regular mood in using this address term. In other words, Thomas regularly used FN to call his subordinates, Charlie and Isaiah.

C. First Name and Occupational Hierarchy

Datum 3.22

Thomas	: All gone. Oh! Did you do what was on your list, Ada ? You and your fucking lists. Did you? (3.22)
Ada	: I spoke to an old friend of Freddie's. He's a Communist Party candidate for Basall Heath. I asked him about the Birmingham branch of the National Vigilance Committee. He said he'd heard the Soviet Embassy was getting information from the inside.
Thomas	: And? Has he got a name?
Ada	: Yes. But just promise me no one will get killed.

In Datum 3.22, Thomas was talking to Ada, his subordinate. In the utterance above, Thomas asked Ada about her job because Thomas wanted to know further information about the business. The business talk was shown in Ada's utterance “I spoke to an old friend of Freddie's. He's a Communist Party candidate for Basall Heath. I asked him about the Birmingham branch of the National Vigilance Committee. He said he'd heard the Soviet Embassy was getting information from the inside.”

Thomas used FN to call his subordinate, Ada. FN is a common address term to be used by a boss to subordinate. In this situation, Thomas was not in a good mood. In other words, Thomas was angry about his business things. Therefore, FN in this utterance could be meant as a boss who scolds his subordinate. The tension of the address term, FN, in this utterance is high because of Thomas' angriness. Then, Thomas used FN to make Ada directly give him an answer.

D. Title plus Last Name and Social Status and Distance

Datum 4.91

Thomas	: Uh... Oh, my God, I am heartily sorry for having... (4.90)
Hughes	: Instead of "God," say my name. Since it was me you offended with your false allegation.
Thomas	: Father Hughes , I am heartily sorry for having offended you, because of your just punishment, but most of all, because they offend you. Father Hughes , who art all good and deserving of my love, I firmly resolve to... With the help of your grace, to sin no more and to avoid all near occasions of sin. (4.91)
Hughes	: Mmm. Very good. Thank you. Amen. And now that we are a united band once more, perhaps we could order some food.

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In Datum 4.91, Thomas was in a meeting with the Grand Duke, Grand Duchess, and Father Hughes. They were talking about business between Shelby Co. Ltd. and Russia representatives, Grand Duke. Meanwhile, Father Hughes was one of Thomas' business partners who was in charge of introducing Thomas to Grand Duke. Even though Father Hughes was a priest, he was also working to earn some money too.

The business talk was not clear in the utterance, but Thomas said sorry to Father Hughes to make sure that his business went smoothly. In the utterance, Thomas used TLN to address Father Hughes. Father is the Title for the priest. Meanwhile, Hughes was the last name of the priest. Actually, TLN is used to show respect to someone. However, in this context, Thomas was forced to use TLN to say sorry to Father Hughes to make his business go smoothly. In other words, the function of TLN used by Thomas was not for showing respect. It was a 'formal respect' for Father Hughes to clear his name, so the business could run.

Other Types of Address Terms

A. Miscellaneous and Family Relationships

Datum 3.2

Michael : Up slightly. There's also been a threefold increase in donations to the Shelby Foundation charity. The counsellor suggested naming the new school "The Grace Shelby Institute."

Thomas : Tell the counsellor the name "Grace Shelby Institute" is acceptable to us. This is a list on the other things I want doing. **That's all. (3.2)**

In Datum 3.2, Thomas was talking with Michael, his brother, and Polly, his mother. Michael and Polly were Thomas' subordinates. They were talking about the name of the foundation under Shelby Co. Ltd. The business talk was shown in utterance "Tell the counsellor the name "Grace Shelby Institute" is acceptable to us. This is a list of the other things I want to do. **That's all.**"

Thomas did not use address terms in stopping the meeting. He preferred to be straightforward about giving the decision for the name. In this case, it meant that Thomas used zero address terms. The reason was because Thomas was not in a good mood to talk further with Polly and Michael. He tried to indirectly ask them to leave his room.

B. Miscellaneous and Social Status and Distance

Data 3.25 and 3.27

Thomas : **I need to know the name of the person in the organisation that was giving you information. (3.25)**

Monkland : What organisation?

Thomas : The Economic League, the Vigilance Committee, the Odd Fellows, Section D. They have many fucking names. (3.26)

Monkland : Shit, shit, shit.

Thomas : **Give me the name of the informant. (3.27)**

Monkland : Mr Shelby, they are very, very dangerous people.

In Data 3.25 and 3.27, Thomas was talking to Monkland about his business' needs. The business talks could be seen in **"I need to know the name of the person in the organization that was giving you information."** The information about the name of the organization was needed by Thomas to let him know who was behind all the business problems. Then, Thomas did not use address terms while talking to Monkland because they had different social status. Thomas had a higher status than Monkland. Thomas was not close to Monkland either. Thomas preferred to use zero address terms rather than using wrong address terms. Another reason was Thomas needed the answers as soon as possible, so he tried to straightforwardly ask the question to Monkland. Thomas used zero address terms in an urgent condition. Therefore, he could not think further about a suitable address term.

C. Miscellaneous and Occupational Hierarchy

Datum 3.24

Ada	: And what is it that I want?
Thomas	: There's gonna be a vacancy coming up at Shelby Company Limited. Boston office. (3.24)
Ada	: Boston, America?
Thomas	: Lipstick. Clothes from Paris. No revolvers. All legal. Just turn a few heads. Do the transit deals. James Monkland, right? Good night. I love you.

In Datum 3.24, Thomas was talking to Ada, his subordinate. To be specific, Thomas gave a job vacancy to Ada. This business talk was shown in utterance **"There's gonna be a vacancy coming up at Shelby Company Limited. Boston office."** In this utterance, Thomas did not use any address terms. The first reason was because he had used FN in the beginning of his conversation with Ada. It meant that he did not need to use address terms again in his middle of conversation because it would sound weird if he used FN again and again. The second reason was he just casually gave an opportunity to Ada to a new job position in another city. The third reason was Thomas wanted to be straightforward in informing the job vacancy.

While giving that offering, Thomas did not force Ada to take the chance. In other words, he only informed Ada about some new benefits in Ada to help him in his business plan by taking that job vacancy. In other words, the writer could say that address terms were not necessary in this utterance. Thomas may use an address term if he would force Ada to take that job vacancy.

D. Miscellaneous

Datum 3.3

Thomas	: Tell the counsellor the name "Grace Shelby Institute" is acceptable to us. This is a list on the other things I want doing. That's all. (3.2)
Polly	: Tommy.
Thomas	: That's all, Pol. Well done, both of you. (3.3)

In Datum 3.3, Thomas was talking to Polly and Michael. They were in Thomas' room. They were discussing a suitable name for a foundation under Shelby Co. Ltd. As the leader of the company, Thomas gave the decision to the suitable foundation's name. After discussing the name, Thomas wanted to stop the meeting. When he had stopped the meeting, his mother knew that

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something was wrong with him, so she did not want Thomas to stop the meeting. However, Thomas was not happy with their appearance in his room.

Therefore, he said “That's all, Pol. **Well done, both of you.**” to stop the meeting and indirectly asked them to leave his room. He did not have any types of address terms. Whereas he used another type of address term which was **both of you**. **Both of you** functioned as person deixis. Person deixis meant to point person, such as “him, them, those” (cf. Yule, 2005, p. 130). In this context, Thomas used **both of you** to address Polly and Michael. Polly and Michael knew that **both of you** from Thomas meant to call them.

In general, the study found out that social factors influenced Thomas Shelby to choose the appropriate types of address terms in business communication. For instance, Thomas could use FN to express his close relationship, good or bad mood, serious order, etc. In other words, not all the types were used in his business talks. On some occasions, he did not use any types of address terms. The existing and non-existing types of address terms were related to some social factors.

CONCLUSION

In this study, it revealed that not all the types of address terms and social factors were used by Thomas in his business talks. Thomas used FN, TLN, and other types, such as zero address terms. Some social factors influencing the use of address terms used by Thomas in business communication were family relationships, social relationships, and occupational hierarchy. Therefore, in a business talk, Thomas as a speaker may choose the use of appropriate terms of address in accordance with the social factors to maximize communication's purposes. I recommended that further study be done in TV series focusing on the types of address terms and social factors used by women and men in business communication and transactions. Despite the limitations of this present study, the writer hopes that the findings of this research will give insight into the use of address terms and their relations to some social factors.

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