

The Realization of Politeness Principles in Persian

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The Aim of the Study

In order to establish the ways in which patterns of politeness differ from one language to another, we need to establish how different intra-cultural sources of variability (situational and individual) account for actual use in each language. Therefore, substantive claims about the universality or diversity of pragmatic principles across cultures and languages should await further research applied in as many new contexts as possible. The present study aims to be a contribution to such a challenge. It intends to extract and categorize the range of politeness strategies (positive politeness, negative politeness and off-record politeness) used by Persian mono-lingual speakers in certain situations and to compare and contrast them with those employed in English, based on the model proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987: pp102,131).

More specifically this study addresses the following questions:

1. Do Farsi-speaking interlocutors follow the same politeness strategies mentioned in Brown and Levinson's model?
2. Does the sex of the interlocutors affect the kind of strategies used by the two groups (males and females)?
3. Does the socioeconomic status of the interlocutors affect the kind of strategies used by the two groups (low and high socio-economic status)?

Socio-economic status is a subjective concept which can be defined differently by different researchers. In this study it is meant to refer to the job of the interlocutor's father, the level of education, and the area of the interlocutor's residence.

Data Elicitation Method

It was decided that an open-ended questionnaire, composed of written situations and a brief description of the interlocutors' characteristics (age, sex, level of education and the degree of familiarity between the interlocutors), be chosen. In order to collect a corpus of politeness strategies, two groups of 30 university students, both males and females, matched for mean age and socio-economic status, were asked to answer the questionnaire in class with no time limit being set. The data were supplemented with natural situated conversational exchanges and examples drawn from Persian native speakers' intuitions.

Results of the Study

Positive Politeness

This kind of politeness is oriented towards the positive "face" of the listener. The speaker treats the listener as a member of an in-group, a friend or a person whose wants and personality traits are known and liked. The strategies of positive politeness are as follows:

a. Notice, attend to listener (his wants, interests & needs)

The speaker takes notice of the listener's condition (noticeable changes, remarkable possessions, anything which looks as though the listener wants the speaker to notice and approve of it).

مونث: چه كيف قشنگي!
مذکر: چه خوش نيب شدي!
You look so nice!

b. Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with listener)

This is often done with exaggerated intonation, stress and other aspects of prosodics, as well as the use of intensifying modifiers.

مذکر: واي پسر محشر شدي!
How lovely you are!

مونث: چقدر ناز شدي مثل فرشته ها شدي!
How nice you've become! You look like an angel!

c. Intensify interest of listener

Another way for the speaker to communicate with the listener that he shares some of his desires is intensifying the interest in his own contribution to the conversation by "making a good story". He pulls the listening right into the middle of the events being discussed.

اگه گفتي تو اتوبوس کيو ديدم؟ کسي که هم تو مي شنا سيش هم من. يه نفر که چند روز پيشم ديديمش. اگه بت بگم باورت

نميشه. متوجه شدي کيه يا نه؟ (شوهر جوان به همسرش)

Guess who I saw on the bus? Someone who both of us know. Someone I saw a few days ago.
If I tell you, you won't believe me. Can you guess who it was?

d. Use of in-group identity markers

There are different ways to convey in-group membership:

i) Usage of address forms *

In many languages, including Persian, the second-person plural pronoun of address is used as an honorific form as a sign of respect. In addition, the use of a 'T' may be used as a sign of solidarity. In English there is no difference in the form of "you" used for second person singular or second person plural. The 'T' is derived from French in which 'T' is a pronoun which is used for informally addressing another person and has the literal meaning of the second person singular. It is usually used by those who do not have much social distance from each other. It can also be used to show solidarity. 'V' is another pronoun which has the literal meaning of the second person plural. It is used for addressing a person who is higher than the speaker especially in terms of power. For example 'T' is used for addressing our friends or our younger sisters or brothers but 'V' is used to address our professor or our boss). (Fazold 1990)

حالا شما بفرمایید بنشینید.

Please take a seat now.

تو خودت گفتی که میایی مدرسه مون تا غیبتم رو مجاز کنی. (فرزند دبستانی به مادرش)

You yourself said you would come to my school to tell the principal why I was absent.

Other address forms are used to convey such in-group membership, like generic terms and terms of address, such as:

چطوری خانم خانما؟ (دو دوست دختر)

My friend, is that the way between two friends?

علی گلّه به کم یو اشتر؟ بچه خوابه. (مادر به فرزند کوچکش)

Dear Ali ('Ali the flower' in Persian), speak more quietly; the baby is asleep.

ii) Use of in-group language or dialect

The phenomenon of code-switching involves any switch from one language or dialect to another in communities where the linguistic repertoire includes two or more such codes. In situations where code-switching occurs, we may expect a switch into the code associated with the in-group and domestic values to be a potential way of encoding positive politeness. For example, a Bakhtiari man who wants to speak with his Fars wife will use Persian, but when he wants to talk with his relatives, he will use Bakhtiari to show solidarity.

iii) Use of jargon

For example, a doctor uses medical terms when he speaks with his colleagues, but uses simple language when he speaks with his patients.

iv) Use of contractions and ellipsis

There is an inevitable association between the use of ellipsis and the existence of in-group shared knowledge. The speaker and the listener must share some knowledge about the context to make the utterance understandable.

پس علي ديگه چرا؟ (از علي انتظار نداشتم كه دست به يك چنين كاري بزنه.) (دو دوست در مقابل يك غريبه)
Why Ali? I didn't expect him to do such a thing.

In English, as well as Persian, many nicknames are simply contracted forms of the full name.

خشي (خشایار) - از اي (ازیتا) (صدا زدن فرزندان در خانه يا يك دوست دوست ديگر را)
'Khashi' for 'Khashayar', 'Azi' for 'Azita'

v) Seek agreement

- **Safe topics.** * The speaker seeks ways to agree with the listener. The raising of safe topics allows the speaker to stress his agreement with the listener, therefore satisfying the listener's desire to be right. In English, the weather is a safe topic for virtually everyone. In Persian, however, 'greetings' is a safe topic, and the philosophy behind that is the Islamic belief which says "Salam is mostahab and its answer is vajeb".

Another way to seek agreement is by looking for topics in which it is possible to agree. In English there is this example: Your neighbor comes home with a new car, and you think it is huge and pollution-producing. You might still say "Isn't your new car a beautiful color?"

However, in Persian if a close friend buys something for us that we don't like, we may explicitly tell him/her:

(پسر يا دختر نوجوان به مادر يا پدر كه براي او
چيزي خريده است يا سوغاتي آورده است) مي گويد:
"اين ديگه چيه برا من خريدي؟"
What is it you've bought for me?

If the addressee does not have a close relationship with us, we may first praise his possession and then make a comment on it. For instance, you go to your brother-in-law's house and you see he has bought a new piece of furniture in a color you do not like. First you say:

قشنگه مبارك باشد اما اگر فلان رنگش رو خريده بوديد بيشتتر به دکوراسيون خونه تون مي اومد. (دختر خواهر به خاله يا پسر خواهر به دايي)

It's really nice. Congratulations. But if it were brown, it would match your curtains and carpet much better.

- **Repetition.** Agreement may also be stressed by repeating part or all of what the preceding speaker has said in a conversation. This is true for English as well as in Persian. Such a repetition may show our delightful, sorrow or surprise, e.g.

الف: فلاني رو بردنش بيمارستان. (دو همسايه)

A: They took him to the hospital.

ب: بردنش بيمارستان! اخه برا چي؟ من به د بقه پيش ديدمش.

B. To the hospital? What for? I saw him a short time ago.

vi) Avoid disagreement

- **Token agreement.** The desire to agree or appear to agree with the listener may lead to “token” agreement. The speaker may twist his utterances so as to appear to agree or to hide disagreement. He may respond to an utterance with “Yes, but ...” rather than a blatant “No”.

- علي بچه خوبيه اگه بدني ياش رو کنار بذاره. (داماد به مادر خانم در مقابل برادر زن نوجوان)
Ali is a good boy if you put the bad aside.

- **Pseudo-agreement.** This is where the speaker uses “then” to indicate that he is drawing a conclusion to a line of reasoning carried out cooperatively with the listener.

-خب، پس قرار شد فردا بريم خونه مريم؟ (دختر به مادر)
Well, we're going to Maryam's house tomorrow.

- **White lies.** This is used when the speaker wants to save the listener's positive "face".

شما به منزل يکي از اشنايان خود مي رويد و او از عادات غذايي شما اطلاعي ندارد و بر حسب تصادف غذايي را پخته است که شما دوست نداريد بنابر اين شما با بي اشتهايي غذا مي خوريد او از شما مي پرسد «ايا دست پخت او را دوست نداريد؟» و شما در جواب او مي گوييد «قبل از اينکه بيايم اينجا چيزي خوردم که اشتهاي مرا

کور کرده است.»

You go to someone's house for dinner, but they don't know what you like. By chance, they have cooked something that you don't like. So you eat it without much of an appetite. She asks you, "Don't you like my cooking?" You answer, "Just before I came here, I ate something that spoiled my appetite."

- **Hedging opinions.** * In order to be polite, the speaker may exaggerate, and this is often manifested by choosing words at the extremes of the relevant value system. Normally, hedges are a feature of negative politeness but some hedges can have a positive politeness function. Based on the situations observed, the hedges used in the selected conditions were normally in the form of prayers or swear words.

خير ببيني آگه مي ري اون ور خيابون منم با خودت ببر. (خانم ميان سال به دختر جوان)
May you have God's blessing! If you're going to cross the street, please take me.

ماشاءالله، چشم کف پات چقدر خوشگل شدي. (مادر ميان سال به پسر تازه دامادش)
What God will! May I be the humblest to you! How handsome you've become!

vii) Presuppose/raise/assert common ground

- **Gossip, small talk.** The speaker may talk about general, unrelated topics to stress his interest in the listener, to indicate that he has not just come on specific business.

مونث : سلام خسته نباشيد حال شما خوب است خانواده چطورند ببخشيد مزاحم شدم مي خواستم ببينم آگه قيچي تون دم دست است انو چند لحظه به ما قرض بديد زود براتون مي يارم.

One neighbor to another neighbor: "Hello! How is it going? Are you well? How is your family? Excuse me for bothering you. If your scissors are handy, would you lend them to me? I'll bring them right back."

- **Point-of-view switch.** Techniques may be used to reduce the distance between the speaker and the listener's points of view. The speaker talks with the listener as if their knowledge about the topic were equal, for example, by using tag questions or "you know".

يه چاي داغ تو اين هواي سرد مي چسبه، مگه نه؟ (دو دوست در يك روز سرد پاييز در محوطه دانشگاه)
A hot cup of tea in this cold weather hits the spot, doesn't it?

• **Presuppose knowledge of listener's wants and attitudes.** *

Negative questions which presume “yes” as an answer are widely used as a way to indicate that the speaker knows the listener's wants, tastes, habits, etc. In English negative questions are mostly used, while in Persian it is mainly in the form of positive questions, e.g. “Wouldn't you like a drink?”, “Don't you want some medicine now?”.

په چاي مي خوري برات بريزم؟ (زن به شوهر)
Would you drink a tea if I poured it for you?

viii) Jokes

Jokes put the listener at ease, and are based on mutual shared background knowledge. They minimize the demand of a request.

(همکار خانم مردی به خانم *(request for information)* - امارتان که زیاد نشده؟ (یعنی بچه دار شدید یا نه)
ان مرد)

Have you had any new additions to your family?

v) Assert or presuppose the speaker's knowledge of and concern about the listener's wants

One way of indicating that the speaker and the listener are cooperators, thus putting pressure on the listener to cooperate with the speaker, is to assert or imply knowledge of the listener's wants or willingness.

می دونم کلاس دارید اما بیشتر از یه دقیقه وقتتون رو نمی گیرم. (دانشجو به استادش)
I know you have a class, but I will only take a minute of your time.

x) The speaker may claim that whatever the listener wants, the speaker wants for him and will help him to obtain.

چیزی نمی خوامی سر راه برات بگیرم؟ (شوهر به زن)
Do you want me to pick anything on the way for you?

vi) Be optimistic

A tacit claim may be made that the listener will cooperate with the speaker because it will be in their mutual interest. The speaker puts pressure on the listener to cooperate with him.

فردا که دیگه جزوه رو حتما برام میاری؟ (دوست اول به دومی)
Bring the notes tomorrow for sure.

vii) Include both the speaker and the listener in the activity

The inclusive “we” form is used when the speaker really means “you” and “me”, calling upon cooperative assumptions.

بیایید بریم به چیزی بخوریم (من گرسنه ام) (یک دوست به دوستان دیگرش)
Come on! Let's get something to eat.

viii) Give (or ask for) reasons

Include the listener in the speaker's reasoning. Giving reasons is a way of implying “I can help you” or “You can help me”, and assumes cooperation.

چرا سفره هنوز پهن است؟ (مادر که از خرید به خانه برگشته به دختر نوجوانش)
Why is the tablecloth still on the table?

ix) Assume or assert reciprocity

Giving evidence of reciprocal rights or obligations between the speaker and listener, e.g., “I’ll do X for you if you do Y for me”, “I did X for you last week so you do Y for me this week”. In Persian, we can use the present tense as it is used in English, but we can start our request with “I” or “you”.

«من میرم کتابو برات بخرم تو هم این قسمت رو بر من تایپ کن» (برادر به خواهر)
I'll go get the book for you, and you type this part for me.

However, in the case of the past tense in English, we do not have Farsi equivalents, and if we use such sentences in the past tense in Farsi, they are interpreted as if they are intended to produce a feeling in the addressee that he/she owes a lot to the addressor. The act, which leads to such an interpretation is called “منت گذاشتن” in Persian.

For example:

«من اون هفته ماشینم رو بت قرض دادم تو هم یه روز کامپیوترت رو به من قرض بده»
I lent you my car last week, then lend me your computer for today.

x) Give gifts to listener (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation) *

We have the classic positive politeness act of gift-giving, not only tangible gifts but also human wants, like wanting to be liked, admired, cared about, understood, listened to and so on. As far as sympathy is concerned, we can observe many more cases of humility and deeper expression of sympathy by females than males. Furthermore, the speakers may resort to shared religious beliefs in order to bring about a kind of mental relief to the listener.

خدا مرگم بده پات چي شده؟ (مونث به مونث)

'God bless you!', 'Oh my Lord!' ('God kills me' is the literal translation of what is said in Persian to show sympathy), 'What happened to your leg?'

تسليت مي گم انشاء الله خدا صبرت بده.

My condolences! May God bless you with patience.'

Negative Politeness

Negative politeness is oriented toward satisfying the listener's negative face. Furthermore, it is the kernel of respect behavior. Negative politeness enjoys both on-record delivery and redress of a Face Threatening Act (hereon referred to as an FTA). An FTA is an act which threatens the positive or negative face of the addressee (Wardhaugh, 1986). The following are the strategies used for the realization of negative politeness:

a. Being conventionally indirect

There is a clash between the desire to be direct and the desire to be indirect. Some compromise between the two is reached in the strategy of conventional indirectness. For example, imperatives are used to make offers, and assertions are used to command.

چقدر اينجا هوا سرده؟ (لطفا بخاري رو روشن کن) (دختر جوان به برادر بزرگترش)
How cold it is in here!

b. Questioning/hedging

Some indirect speech acts are conventionalized to the extent that there can be no doubt about what is meant. A "hedge" is a particle, word or phrase that modifies the degree of membership of a predicate or a noun phrase to a set.

مريم جون ميشه اون درو ببندي؟ (دختر نوجواني به دوستش)
Maryam, would you close that door?

c. Being pessimistic

This strategy gives redress to the listener's negative face by explicitly expressing doubt that the conditions for the appropriateness of the speaker's speech act have been obtained.

فرض کنید به علت بیماری نمی توانید سر کلاس حاضر شوید و می خواهید جزوه یکی از هملاسی هایتان را قرض بگیرید به او می گوئید؟ ببخشید آگه دیروز سر کلاس بودید می تونم از جزوه شما استفاده کنم؟
Suppose you were sick yesterday and you couldn't attend your class. Today you say to one of your friends: "Excuse me, if you were in class yesterday, could I use your notes?"

d. Minimizing the imposition

One way of reducing the tension of the FTA is to indicate that the intrinsic seriousness of the imposition is not in itself great, leaving only social distance and power as possible weighting factors (Uchida, 1992).

همیشه چند دقیقه مته تون رو به ما قرض بد بد زود براتون می یارم؟
Could you lend me your drill for just a minute? I'll bring it right back.

e. Giving deference *

There are two ways to give deference:

1. The speaker humbles and abases himself. In this case, we observe more cases of humility in females than males.

بازم مثل همیشه مزاحم شما شدم.
Once again, as usual, I am giving you trouble.

یک کلبه خرابه ای است قابل بدونید تشریف بیارید.
My house is very humble but you're welcome here.

2. The speaker tries to use words and expressions which convey the idea that he/she admires and appreciates the hearer for helping him/her).

ببخشید مادر چون این ادرسو بلدید؟
Excuse me, madam, do you know this address?

ببخشید استاد چند لحظه می تونم وقت شریفتون رو بگیرم؟
Excuse me, professor, can I take a few minutes of your valuable time?

In both cases what is conveyed is that the listener is of a higher social status than the speaker. By “honorifics”, we understand direct grammatical encodings of the relative social status between participants, e.g., the use of plural pronouns to singular addressees.

دانشجو در تایید صحبت استاد ش. " درست همینطور است که شما می فرمایید."
The student in answer to his professor says: " Yes, Sir! As you wish."

کارمند خطاب به رئیسش: بنده که خدمت جنابعالی عرض کردم.
The clerk in reply to his director says: " I told you about the situation, Sir!"

While T/V systems as referent honorifics give respect directly to the listener, other referent honorifics can provide inferences that indirectly give respect to the addressee.

- بفرمایید میل کنید /پس بخورید
'Try it' or 'Please help yourself' ('Befamaiid meil koniid' in formal Persian, 'Pas bokhoriid' in informal Persian).

f. Apologizing

The speaker can indicate his unwillingness to impinge on the listeners negative face and partially redress that impingement.

1. The speaker can simply admit that he is impinging on the listener's face.

معدرت می خوام دیر وقت مزاحم شدم.
I'm sorry to bother you so late.

2. The speaker can attempt to show that he is reluctant to impinge on the listener with the use of hedges or expressions.

ببخشید آگه قیچی تون دم دسته و با اون کاری ندارید میشه چند لحظه اونو به ما قرض بدید؟(مونث)
If your scissors are handy and you don't need them, let me use them for a moment.

3. The speaker may beg the listener for forgiveness.

ببخشید که وقت شما رو گرفتم؟
Excuse me for taking your time.

صاحبخانه زن که با مهمان خود درد دل می کند پس از پایان صحبت خود می گوید: "ببخشید سر شما رو
Excuse me for giving you a headache.

درد اوردم یا ببخشید پر حرفی کردم."
Excuse me if I talked too much.

g. Impersonalizing

Both the speaker and the listener avoid the pronouns “I” and “you”. The speaker phrases the FTA as if the agent were other than speaker.

من دارم بهت مي گم که راه درستش چیه.
I'm telling you what the right way is.

h. Stating the FTA as a general rule

By stating the FTA is an example of a general rule, regulation or obligation, the speaker is able to communicate that he or she doesn't want to impinge, but is merely forced to by the circumstances of this FTA.

مسافرهائي گرامي موقع فرود آمدن هواپيما کمر بند هاي خود رو ببنديد.
Passengers, please fasten your seat belts for landing.

i. Nominalizing *

In English, the degree of negative politeness runs hand in hand with the degree of nouniness (Ross 1973); that is, formality is associated with the noun end of the continuum. For example, in English the third utterance is more formal and is usually used in the written form, while in Farsi we can observe rare cases in which nominalization leads to higher degree of formality.

In English we have:

You performed well on the examinations and we were favorably impressed.
Your performing well on the examinations impressed us favorably.
Your good performance on the examinations impressed us favorably.

In Farsi , we have:

جناب اقاي استاندار د امروز به شهر ما تشریف آوردند و ما مقدم ایشان را گرامي ي داريم.
تشریف فرمائي جناب اقاي استاندار د به شهرمان را گرامي مي داريم.
'The Governer General came to our city today and we warmly welcomed him.' Or 'We warmly welcomed the Governer General to our city.'

j. Going on record to incur a debt or to not indebt the listener

The speaker can redress an FTA by explicitly claiming his indebtedness to the listener or by disclaiming any indebtedness of the listener.

زحماتي رو که برام کشيديد هيچ وقت فراموش نمي کنم.
We'll never forget the assistance you gave us.

Off-record Politeness

A communicative act is done off-record in such a way that it is not possible to attribute only one clear communicative intention to that act. Off-record utterances are essentially indirect uses of language. To construct an off-record utterance, one says something that is either more general or actually different from what one means. It involves two stages:

1. a trigger serves notice to the addressee that some inference must be made.
2. some mode of inference derives what is meant from what is actually said.

The following are the strategies used for the realization of off-record politeness:

a. Giving hints

If the speaker says something that is not explicitly relevant, he invites the listener to search for an interpretation of the possible reference. The basic mechanism here is the violation of the Maxim of Relevance (Grice, 1975). Note: Grice proposed two kinds of maxims which are used to convey additional messages in conversations. The first one is the conventional maxim which results from using some linguistic devices. e.g., "Even John can swim in this pool", which conveys the message that this pool is shallow. The second type of maxim is the conversational maxim, whose violations lead to conveying some messages indirectly. The first maxim is "quantity" which tells us to give as much information as necessary, to not give more information than is necessary, and to not give less information than is necessary. The second maxim is "Quality" which tells us not to say something for which you have no evidence, to not say what is false". The third one is "Manner" which says to not be ambiguous, to be clear". And the last one is "Relevance" which says to be relevant to the topic of conversation" (Wolfson 1989).

Many cases of truly indirect (off-record) speech acts are accomplished by hints that consist of "raising the issue of" some desired act by stating motives or reasons for doing it.

جبین سر راهت مغازه شیرینی فروشی بازه؟ (زن به شوهرش)
See if there is some candy somewhere on your way.

Hints may also be given by asserting or questioning the conditions as in indirect requests:

وقتی اومدی تو خونه درو دوباره باز گذاشتی (درو ببند)
When you came home, did you leave the door open?

b. Giving association clues

A related kind of implicature, triggered by relevance violations, is provided by mentioning something associated with the act required of the listener, either by precedence in the speaker/listener experience, or by mutual knowledge irrespective of their interactional experience.

مثال: پدر و مادرتان می خواهند به بازار بروند و شما نیز می خواهید به خانه تان بروید و می دانید انها از همان مسیر عبور می کنند پس رو به پدر خود کرده می گوئید "بابا من هم می خوام برم خونه خاله." (یعنی منم با خودتان بیاید)

Your parents want to go shopping and you need to go to your aunt's house. You know they go the same way, so you turn to your father and say: "Father, I want to go to my aunt's house."

c. Pressuposing

A third set of clues to the speaker's intentions is related in a different way to the Relevance Maxim. An utterance can be almost wholly relevant in context and yet violate the Relevance Maxim just at the level of its presuppositions.

-علی هنوز از سر کار بر نگشته است؟ (خیلی دیر کرده) 0
Has Ali still not returned from work?

d. Understating

In this and the following two strategies we consider how the addressee can be invited to make inferences by the speaker's violation of the Quantity Maxim. In a sense, all conversational implicatures violate the Quantity Maxim, since by being indirect the speaker is inevitably saying something less than or something different from what he actually intends to convey. Understatements are one way of generating implicatures by saying less than is required. Typical ways of constructing understatements are to choose a point on a scalar predicate that is well below the point that actually describes the state of affairs, or to hedge a higher point which will implicate the (lower) actual state of affairs.

یه خورده عقلش پاره سنگ برمی داره. (عقل درست و حسابی نداره).
He must be a bit off his nut.

e. Overstating

If the speaker says more than is necessary, thus violating the Quantity Maxim in another way, he may also convey implicatures. He may do this by inverting the understatement principle, that is, by exaggerating or choosing a point on a scale which is higher than the actual state of affairs.

مثلا به براي رساندن پيغام ضروري به مادر خود چند بار به او زنگ مي زنيد ولي هر بار تلفن اشغال است بالاخره تلفن ازاد مي شود و شما به مادر خود مي گوييد " دو ساعته دارم زنگ مي زنم چرا هميشه تلفن تون اشغاله؟"

To give an important message to your mother, you call her several times but every time the line is busy. Finally, it becomes free and you tell her: " I've been calling for two hours. Why is your telephone always busy?"

f. Using tautologies *

A third method of generating inferences by violations of the Quantity Maxim is to utter patent and necessary truths. By uttering a tautology, the speaker encourages the listener to look for an informative interpretation of the non-informative utterance. It seems that we do not have tautology in Persian as it is observed in English. However, this sentence may be considered an example of tautology:

جون تو جونت كنند عوض بشو نيستي.
The hell you won't change!

g. Using contradictions

By violating the Quality Maxim, the speaker forces the listener to find some implicature that preserves the quality assumption which is perhaps the most basic principle of language usage. Contradictions, as well as the ironies, metaphors and rhetorical questions all involve the violations of the Quality Maxim. By stating two things that contradict each other, the speaker makes it appear that he cannot be telling the truth.

مثلا دختر خاله شما دانشگاه قبول شده است و شما از او مي پرسيد " اين رشته اي كه قبول شده اي رو دوست داري؟ " او در جواب مي گويد " هم اره هم نه ."

Your cousin was offered a place at university. You ask her: "Do you like the field that you were accepted into?" She replies: " In a way yes, in a way no."

h. Being ironic

By saying the opposite of what he means - again a violation of quality – the speaker can indirectly convey his intended meaning if there are clues that his intended meaning is being conveyed indirectly.

به ادم خسييس مي گوييم " تو بايد حاتم طائي مي شدي!"
He's too generous!

i. Using metaphors

Metaphors are a further category of Quality violations, as metaphors are literally false. The use of a metaphor is usually on-record, but there is a possibility that the exact connotation of the metaphor that the speaker intends is off-record.

مثلاً گریه کوره می ماند (به ادم نمک شناس می گویند)
He is a blind cat to other's favors. (He's never grateful)

j. Using rhetorical questions

To ask a question with no intention of obtaining an answer is to break a sincerity condition on questions, namely that the speaker wants the listener to provide him with the indicated information.

مثلاً برادر کوچک شما مسئله ای را چند دفعه از شما می پرسد و شما برای او توضیح می دهید و وقتی توضیحات شما تمام شد او می گوید " این بار چندمه این مسئله رو برات توضیح می دم؟"

Your little brother asks you the same problem several times and you explain the solution to him. The last time you finish your explanation, you tell him: " How many times should I tell you the solution?"

k. Being ambiguous

Purposeful ambiguity may be achieved through metaphor since it is not always clear exactly which of the connotations of a metaphor is intended to be invoked.

دست حاتم طائی رو از پشت بسته (خیلی دست و دلبازه یا یعنی خیلی خسیسه)
He has the upper hand over the most generous!

l. Being vague

The speaker may go off-record with an FTA by being vague about who the object of the FTA is or what the offence is.

"کجا میری؟ میرم همین دور و ورایه گشتی بزمن."
A: Where are you going?
B: I'm just going to wander around here.

m. Over-generalizing

Rule instantiation may leave the object of the FTA vaguely off-record. The listener then has the choice of deciding whether the general rule applies to him in this case.

-اون روزا مردم احترام بزرگتر اشون رو داشتن.
In the old days young people had respect for their elders.

It is similar for the use of proverbs, although their implicatures may be conventionalized to the extent of being on record:

-از هر دست که بدی از همان دست پس می گیری.
-اب که از سر گذشت چه بک و جب چه صد و جب.
In for a penny, in for a pound.

n. Displacing the listener

The speaker may go off-record as to who the target of his FTA is, or he may pretend to address the FTA to someone whom it wouldn't threaten, and hope that the real target will see that the FTA is aimed at him.

مثلا در جمع دوستان خود نشسته اید و یکی از آنها دانشگاه قبول شده است شما رو به دیگر دوستان خود می کنید و می گوئید " بعضی ها دانشگاه قبول می شن شیرینی شم نمی دن."
-مردم کلاس بالا تشریف دارن.

You are sitting among friends and one of them is accepted to university. You turn to your other friends and say: " Some get accepted to university without giving favors."

o. Being incomplete, using ellipsis

This is as much a violation of the Quantity Maxim as of the Manner Maxim. Elliptical utterances are legitimated by various conversational contexts, e.g., in answer to questions.

همکاری رو به همکار جوانش که تازه ازدواج کرده می کند و می گوید " پس شیرینی عروس ات رو به ما ندادی؟ او در جواب می گوید " چند بار شیرین آوردم دانشکده" همکارش دوباره می گوید " ما که ندیدیم؟"

A worker turn to another worker who has just got married and says: "You didn't give us any sweets for your wedding." The other worker replies: "I've bought you sweets several times." The first one says: " We didn't see them."

Discussion and Conclusion

One of the culture-specific aspects that was observed in this study was the use of swear words. Swear words are thought of as being the appropriate expression for both reflecting the value systems of individuals and keeping one's face in natural conversations. Which group of people swear more frequently and in what kind of situations must be investigated in separate research. However, swear words and expressions can be of two types according to my observations:

1. Religious

خانم نسبتاً مسنی در تعارف به مهمانی که به خانه اش آمده است می گوید «به خدا آگه چیزی نخورید ناراحت می شم»

A relatively old lady in welcoming the guest that has come to her house says: "I mean it (for God's sake), if you don't eat anything, I'll be offended"

2. Emotional

Emotional swear words express the swearer's affection for his or her dearest relatives.

دختر بزرگ خانواده که ازدواج کرده است برای خرید مایحتاج منزل به بازار می رود و مادرش را نیز همراه خود می برد تا از همفکری او استفاده کند در بازار رو به مادرش می کند و می گوید «مامان جون من آگه چیزی لازم داری تعارف نکن»

The eldest daughter in the household, who was married, went to the shop to buy some supplies for the house. She takes her mother with her to make use of her suggestions. She tells her mother: "Mother, I mean it (for my sake) if there is anything you want, please don't hesitate to ask."

It seems that swearing, or at least religious swearing, decreases as education increases. It may be because educated people are sure about themselves and their reasoning power so that they do not employ linguistic devices to prove the truth of their speech. In addition, their "face" is solidly established in society. Therefore, there is no urgent need to defend their territory. In fact they use swear words as a last resort.

The other culture-specific linguistic devices that are used frequently by speakers, mainly elderly and/or uneducated ones, as the realization of positive politeness strategies, are the expressions «ان شاء الله» (*if God wishes*), «ماشاء الله» (*God preserve you from the evil eye*), and «مبارک باشد» (*Congratulations!*). The use of these expressions is originally rooted in the cultural and religious beliefs of these people. For example, they believe that if they are going to do something in the future and they are talking about doing it, they must say "if God wishes", otherwise they will not be able to do it when they intend to. They also believe in order to avoid "harm caused by an evil eye", when they see something attractive and beautiful which belongs to somebody, they must say "God preserve you from the evil eye", otherwise, something bad will happen to its owner. Or the expression "Congratulations!" is often used when someone buys something new, whether it is a piece of clothing, a car or home appliance.

Another finding of this study is the kind of “prayers” that are used by the speaker as the realization of negative politeness to encourage the listener to do something for him/her. Such application of prayers seems to be culture-specific and is usually used for making requests. They also appear to be widely used by elderly and/or uneducated people. Furthermore, in the cited examples we can observe another specific characteristic of Farsi utterances which is revealed in the use of address forms. One of the specific uses of address forms in Farsi is the use of address terms which the listener himself/herself is supposed to use in natural situations in relation to the same speaker (Smith-Hefner, 1988).

مادر نسبتاً مسنی به دختر خود می گوید: «مادرجون الهی خیر از عمرت ببینی این لباسها رو بالای پشت بام پهن کن من پام درد می کنه و نمی تونم از پله ها بالا برم.

A not too old mother asks her daughter: “ My dear daughter, may you life be blessed. Would you please hang these clothes up upstairs? My legs hurt and I can’t go up the stairs.”

According to the findings of this study, in answer to the first hypothesis, “Do Farsi-speaking interlocutors follow the same politeness strategies as mentioned in Brown and Levinson’s model (1987)?”, a great deal of parallels can be demonstrated in the expression of politeness between the languages mentioned in the Brown and Levinson’s study and in Persian. The pan-cultural interpretability of politeness phenomenon derives from the universal mutual knowledge assumptions of interacting individuals - that humans are “rational” and that they have “face”. However, the application and the linguistic realization of politeness principles differ systematically across cultures and within cultures, categories and groups. For instance, even if there were some similarities in some cases, there is not an exact compatibility (especially in nominalization and tautologies). In this study, the areas of divergence from the mentioned model were indicated by asteriks(*).

What is of great importance is how such pan-cultural strategies of language use fit the culture-specific facts, and in which ways they can be used to describe those facts. An important dimension of variation has to do with cultural patterns that hold for some particular population in general due to their social values, beliefs and customs (Hudson, 1980).

The study also reveals that in addition to the relative power of the speaker over the listener, the social distance between the speaker and the listener, the ranking of the imposition involved in doing the FTA, and the presence of the audience, the liking factor and the urgency of the act to be performed, must all be taken into account. For example, in this study in situations which required an apology on the part of the speaker, he/she used greater politeness for his/her close friends, while in situations which required requests due to the nature of friendship relationships and/or the urgency of the action, bold on-record utterances were used.

The second hypothesis was “Does the sex of the interlocutors affect the kind of strategies used by each group?”. It should be mentioned that gender is so salient because it is a social construct and it does not exist independently of other social factors such as ethnicity, age, class, sexual orientation and religion. These elements are constantly in interaction. This study reveals that there are some subtle differences in the use of certain strategies however, for example, in the case of apologies, females use more elaborate linguistic expressions in most cases, together with swear words. Females also use more swear words than males in different cases, especially for making ostensible invitations or showing surprise.

ببخشید خانم مشکلی داشتم نتونستم کتابو زودتر بیارم اگه ممکنه مهلت امانت اون رو تمدید کنید خیلی ممنون.

Female: I'm sorry madam, I had a problem and I couldn't bring the book back sooner. If possible, could you extend the time I can keep it?

ببخشید می تونم این کتابو تمدید کنم؟

Male: Could you extend the time I can keep this book?

تو رو خدا بخورید قابل شما رو نداره.

Female: For God sake, have it. It's nothing.

چرا میوه نمی خورید؟

Male: Why don't you eat fruit?

In the case of requests, the females express themselves more softly and indirectly, and the males are more explicit:

مونث-زن رایي جون اگه زحمتتون نمی شه میشه منم باتون بیام؟
مذکر-دایی منم با شما میام.

Female: My dear aunt, if it's not too much trouble, could you take me with you?

Male: Uncle, I'll come with you.

As far as compliments are concerned, there are certain expressions that are used mainly by females or males:

مونث-خدا نکشتت این کیف رو از کجا خریدی؟

Female: Oh gee, where did you get that bag?

مذکر-تیپ زدی یه روز بده باش کلاس بذاریم.

Male: You're very smart-looking. You'll have to lend me that outfit one day so I can impress everyone.

The findings also reveal that females use more sympathetic expressions than males. Furthermore, females use the expression “Congratulations!” more than males. In the case of ostensible invitation, females use more humiliating expressions than males:

- خدا مرگم بده پات چی شده؟
Female: May God kill me! What happened to your leg?
علی پات چی شده؟
Male: Ali! What happened to your leg?
مبارک باشد چه کیف قشنگی داری!
Female: Congratulations! What a nice bag you have!
امروز بالین لباسا چقدر تیپ شدی!
Male: You look so nice today in those new clothes!
بفرمایید قابل شما رو نداره.
Female: Help yourself. It's nothing.
تعارف نکن خونه خودتونه.
Male: Don't be reserved. This is your home.

The data also reveals that there are some expressions which become stabilized among the subjects of this study as a result of exposure to mass media, especially television programs. These expressions continue to be used, especially by the younger generation, until the program ends completely, and even some time after the program finishes. For example, we have the expression این قدر خالی نبند (Don't boast so much) which was used by both males and females, although it seems to be male specific.

Another factor which makes the language of females closer to the language used by males is the development in the social status of females as a result of their academic education and the social responsibilities they have.

Finally, in answer to the third hypothesis, “Does the socio-economic status of the interlocutors affect the kind of strategies used by the two groups?”, as far as the collected data is concerned, we must say that there is no significant difference between the two groups. The reason for this may be the fact that these subjects are university students and they try to use forms that are used by educated people, not the forms that they actually use in other informal situations. However, we can observe some weak traces of socio-economic status in a few cases, especially used by males with a lower socio-economic status. In order to obtain more reliable results, it is better to observe the same subjects in environments other than the university campus, and also to increase the number of subjects.

Another reason for lack of significant differences between the two groups may be the kind of situations used by the researcher or the nature of the questionnaire which cannot be completely successful in extracting the vernacular.

Implications of the study

This work has focused on identifying cultural differences. The significance of the work on second language interference, as well as that on cross-cultural interaction, lies in the great accumulation of detailed information about how speakers of different languages use and interpret politeness strategies, and how different factors involved in the use of each strategy are assessed in different languages. In further research it can be demonstrated how these minor differences in interpretive strategies, when carried over from a first to a second language, can lead to misunderstandings and cross-group stereotyping of interactional styles. However, there is no inherent contradiction between the effects of linguistic and cultural differences and the existence of universal properties on the linguistic construction of utterances.

Moreover, we need to investigate the parameters and variables involved in the realization and expression of a given act in different languages, and the differential distribution of the various strategies across social populations.

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