

RU

Стратегии вежливости в британском и персидском семейном дискурсе: формы обращения

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Аннотация. Цель исследования - выявить сходства и различия норм вежливости и стратегий вежливости категории обращения в британской и персидской семье и проиллюстрировать их культурные различия. Научная новизна исследования заключается в анализе речевого акта обращения в британской и персидской семейной обстановке с опорой на теорию вежливости/невежливости, теорию речевого акта, межкультурный прагматический и дискурсивный анализ, исследование конструирования идентичности и влияния вежливости на коммуникативные стили. В результате доказано, что в британской культуре стратегии вежливости являются эгалитарными в асимметричных контекстах сверху вниз (родители - дети) и снизу вверх (дети - родители). Между тем в персидской культуре из-за расширенного индекса дистанции власти существуют заметные различия в этих контекстах.

EN

Politeness Strategies in British and Persian Family Discourse: Forms of Addressing

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Abstract. The aim of the study is defining the similarities and differences of politeness norms and politeness strategies of addressing in British and Persian family and illustrating them through cultural distinctions. The scientific novelty of the study lies in our analysis of addressing speech act in British and Persian family setting with concentrating on (im)politeness theory, speech act theory, cross-cultural pragmatic and discourse analysis, research on identity construction, and the effect of politeness on communicative styles. Our findings reveal that in British culture, the politeness strategies are egalitarian in asymmetrical top-down (parents to children) and bottom-up (children to parents) contexts. Meanwhile, in Persian culture, due to an expanded index of power distance, there are notable differences in these contexts.

Introduction

Addressing another person is a fundamental attribute of everyday interpersonal interactions as it plays an influential role in structuring the relationships between interlocutors. Every addressing system is a reflection of interlocutors' acts and cultural values. Furthermore, forms of addressing represent the approaches of politeness through which the interlocutors' identity and conceptualization of their relationships with other people are illustrated. Since notions of politeness are communicated through different approaches in different cultures [1], forms of addressing also differ among cultures subsequently. In other words, selecting an appropriate form of addressing through interpersonal interactions involves being aware of socio-pragmatic as well as pragma-linguistic competence [16]. Socio-pragmatic competence is demonstrated as the knowledge of influential parameters such as social power and social distance and pragma-linguistic competence is defined as the speaker's awareness of the linguistic resources and their pragmatic meanings as well [14, p. 309; 17, p. 83; 21].

Therefore, politeness is comprehended as a fundamental feature of communication, specifically between cultures. This importance is intensified where misunderstandings between people from different cultures could bring them negative and destructive impressions that results in their relationships. In such circumstances, examining the strategies of politeness in addressing forms in different cultures can structure one meaningful and practical relevance with targets which are followed in teaching of second language to foreigners. In fact, as the target of teaching second language is granting the communicative competence to language learners, so language learners have to be competent communicatively in the second language. Knowing politeness strategies of addressing forms is one of the most important elements that is why learning second language can dramatically increase the significance

of relevance between this research and teaching second language. In other words, in order to be competent communicatively in second language, it is not only necessary for learners to master the grammatical principles in second language, but learners also have to be able to apply the target language in an appropriate structure which is in accordance with the restrictions in different communicative situations in that second language [16]. All the factors mentioned above define the relevance of this study.

In order to achieve the aim in this research, our tasks are defined as highlighting the forms of addressing which are frequently applied in British and Persian family setting as well as demonstrating how cultural values and politeness strategies shape the norms of interpersonal communication in forms of addressing. We, herein, have limited ourselves to showing politeness strategies through addressing forms in British and Persian family discourse. In this paper, we discuss some theoretical issues concerning politeness, cultural values and the impact of cultural values on politeness as well as communicative behaviors, addressing forms and the influence of some determinative features such as age, gender and religion in order to choose an appropriate form of addressing in British and Persian family setting. Further, we will present the results of our research focused on displaying different addressing forms in the British and Persian family. Since culture is the most important part of making communication in society, in studying of addressing forms from a comparative viewpoint, it is imperative to use such parameters of culture as social distance and power distance [18] or horizontal and vertical distance. In the present research, we attempt to highlight the most essential distinctions in the application of addressing forms in British and Persian family setting and explain them from this point of view.

Since our research is oriented towards examining the forms of addressing as a frequently applied speech act through people's daily interactions, analyzing the politeness norms and strategies in British and Persian family setting as well as investigating these norms and strategies in different cultural contexts, the research methods used in this article are discourse analysis, semantic analysis as well as pragmatic analysis. The research methods in this article are also used to formulate hypotheses based on which in British family, the communicative styles in asymmetrical top-down and bottom-up contexts are egalitarian and children address their parents by first name in addition to the normal form of "Mom/Dad" and in Persian family, the communicative styles show a number of significant distinctions in top-down and bottom-up contexts and children address their parents only by "Mom/Dad" as well as endearing forms. Furthermore, we have applied our ethnographic observations and analysis of the data gathered from questionnaire.

In this paper, we have specifically limited ourselves to addressing forms in British and Persian family setting. The theoretical basis of our study are politeness theory [8; 29; 35] (e.g. Brown & Levinson, Leech, Leech and Larina, Locher, Mugford, Sifianou, Watts), cross-cultural pragmatics [38] (e.g. Levinson, Leech, Richards, Platt, Weber, Watts) and communicative styles theory [25-27; 30] (e.g. Gudykunst, Larina, Wierzbicka).

The practical significance of the research lies in the fact that comparative analysis performed in this article can be well applied in the universities of philology in the case of studying cross-cultural pragmatics, sociolinguistics, discourse analysis as well as theories of politeness. Meanwhile, this research can be an appropriate practical source of designing communicative principles for students who study English-Persian translation and creating exercises which help students to develop pragmatic, discursive and intercultural communicative competences.

Politeness, cultural values and forms of addressing

Researchers in the study of Intercultural Communication field strongly believe in differences in the communicative behaviors in distinctive cultures. They put emphasis on the fact that meanwhile people are speaking different languages, they need to apply different approaches. In fact, people who come from different cultures apply distinctive tools and strategies of language which are influenced by their own cultural values. In other words, speaking different languages in different ways as well as building communication in different styles can be reflected in terms of different cultural values and cultural priorities which have been established independently [38]. According to T. V. Larina [25, p. 196], being aware of these differences plays an influential role in order to make successful intercultural communication and to cope with ethnic stereotype beliefs which take place through intercultural interactions [22; 25; 26].

According to Sh. Blum-Kulka [5; 6], culture is defined as an entity which is self-evident. Meanwhile, R. J. Watts [35, p. 78] states that culture is an objective entity which bears practical role in demonstrating politeness or any other matter in this regard. In fact, cross-cultural studies involve the approaches in which two or more cultures vary in their understanding of politeness and based on which politeness is stated as a culture-specific agreement. Therefore, what is absolutely conceived as a polite behavior in one culture, can be perceived as an absolutely impolite behavior in other culture [34].

The linguistic phenomenon of politeness is accounted distinctively in different cultures, although P. Brown and S. Levinson [8; 9] believe that it is a universal phenomenon. However, among many scientific investigations in this field, Brown and Levinson *face* theory [8, p. 61] is mentioned to possess weight and not only has considerable influence on politeness researches, but also plays a crucial role in the study of speech acts theory. P. Brown and S. Levinson define three main notions including face, face threatening act (FTA), as well as politeness strategies. According to them [Ibidem], the concept of *face* is characterized as "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" [Ibidem]. Based on Brown and Levinson, this public self-image involves two directions and every member of society tends to possess two types of face. One type as negative face is preliminary individual claim in order to have personal territories, private preserves and non-distraction rights and the other type as positive face

is the positive constant self-image consisting of desire based on which people are looking forward to receiving others' approval and appreciation. Speech is viewed potentially as a face threatening act (FTA) either to positive or negative face.

Meanwhile, R. J. Watts [35, p. 8] illustrates a discursive debate of what is polite and impolite is broadly bound to how behaviors are comprehended or perceived in the whole social communicative interaction and not solely at the level of language application. In other expressions, he believes that politeness is defined in linguistic pragmatic as well as nonlinguistic characteristics such as gestures and body language. Consequently, politeness can be discussed as a discursive entity. In fact, from his point of view, discursive features of politeness are connected to the different interpretations and understanding in evaluating behaviors as polite or impolite [15].

One influential category of making politeness is addressing forms. In fact, addressing forms play an effective role in understanding of social notions and human relationships in a community. In other expressions, forms of addressing are an important area of study in the field of socio-cognitive linguistics as they demonstrate how a context shows itself in the etiquettes of communications as well as in language. Meanwhile, communication is inserted in culture which reflects its context and is founded on the previous social experience. In intercultural relationships, culture is viewed as the most important extralinguistic element through which the styles of communication and behavior of people in each society are structured. In cross-cultural situations, the selection of addressing forms shows differences which take place among cultures. Every culture, with its own norms and principles, conducts the selection process of addressing forms which are appropriate to apply among the interlocutors who live in different communities [40, p. 687-688].

Although languages are distinctive in choosing and exerting of addressing forms, it seems that in most languages, "age", "gender", "social status" and "level of formality", as the most important factors in order to apply an appropriate addressing forms, are taken into account. For instance, in Persian culture, due to status-oriented community in which religious instructions and traditional values of paying high respect to those who are older in age and higher in status, specifically parents, grandparents, and teachers, are strictly observed. The indicators of "formality of the context", "power", "social distance", and "solidarity" play an effective role in choosing an appropriate addressing forms [13, p. 12; 23; 31, p. 323].

Generally speaking, the main emphasis in the study of addressing forms has been put on the point how interlocutors apply the collection of addressing variants which are available to them and the details illustrated by the selection of these variants about social organization and hierarchy [7; 10; 39]. In order to be more explicit, forms of addressing are social phenomena and reflect the complications of people's social relations in a given speech community [32]. A. Wierzbicka [37] believes that the lexical semantics of kinship terms is an important element in the field of cultural anthropology as the meaning and the sense of these terms precisely explain how speakers of a specific language reflect their social relationships. Consequently, addressing forms are explained in the framework of (im)politeness theories as the selection of a specific form of addressing which is determined by how polite/impolite it sounds in a specific circumstance. Meanwhile, P. Brown and S. Levinson [9] state that addressing forms act as significant linguistic mechanisms that shape the interlocutors' evaluation of their relationships as well as their perspectives towards other people in daily communicative encounters [21].

The above-mentioned debate approve that the interrelationship between addressing forms and politeness concepts is definitely observed in the realm of addressing behaviors and the principles of addressing in a given speech community [24; 33; 36; 37]. Based on our data, in the setting of family discourse, there are some culture-specific distinctions between British and Persian families in the speech act of addressing. Our findings show that in British family, the politeness strategies of addressing in top-down context between parents and children are formed by using name, nickname or endearing words. Furthermore, in British family, in bottom-up context, children address their parents by their first name or "Mom/Dad". On the other hand, in Persian family, the politeness strategies of addressing in top-down context between parents and children are conducted by using "my daughter / my son", name or nickname. Meanwhile, in bottom-up context children address their parents only "Mom/Dad". To be more specific, in Persian culture, addressing parents by their first name, like as what we observe in British culture, is absolutely non-appropriate and impolite behavior.

The sociocultural context imposes an influence on the categorization process, as a consequence of which, the semantics of the social categories in distinctive cultures reflects distinctive meanings. In fact, categorization is a fundamental cognitive tool by which people are able to define themselves and the world around them [19, p. 123]. Forms of addressing are viewed as a good instance in this regard. Numerous analytical studies in the field of addressing forms [2-4; 10-12; 19; 20; 27; 28] and many others confirm that there are different categories of addressing forms by which social context, cultural norms, beliefs and values of the society are reflected. In other words, in different cultures there are significant distinctions in the priority and regularity of applying addressing forms as well as in their level of formality and intimacy which are discovered in honorific system and kinship terms of that culture [23].

Ways of shaping interpersonal communication by means of politeness strategies in British and Persian forms of addressing

In this research, we examine the forms of addressing which are routinely applied in everyday interactions. Meanwhile, we endeavor to analyse the norms of politeness as well as the strategies of politeness in British and Persian family setting and demonstrate these norms and strategies through cultural differences. In order to compile data for this analysis, we designed a questionnaire in a structure of DCT (Discourse Completion Task). In this questionnaire, British and Persian objects were given a brief explanation of eight situations with the clear

illustration of the setting and family relationship among the members and they were asked to complete the dialogues of these eight situations in the most natural way which usually takes place in family. The questionnaire was designed to extract six speech acts consisting of addressing. We emailed it to overall 200 native British and Persian people. 55 replies from the British and 57 replies from the Persian returned back. The age of the objects is between 20-70 years old. They were British citizens with native English language and Iranian citizens with native Persian language. All the representatives come from middle class of society who have either university degree or are studying at university courses.

Based on our findings, in British family, the politeness strategies of addressing in top-down context between parents and children are formed by using name, nickname or endearing words as in the situations below, when the father addresses his daughter for passing him the salt at dinner table (1-2), when the mother addresses her daughter for babysitting her sibling (3-4), when the father addresses his son after repairing his bike (5), and when the father addresses his son for cleaning the garage (6). In these situations, zero addressing has hardly ever appeared (7-8):

- (1) Maria, could you please pass the salt to me? (father to daughter)
- (2) Sweetheart, could you please pass me the salt? (father to daughter)
- (3) Katy, would you please babysit your brother? (mother to daughter)
- (4) Honey, would you please babysit your little sister? (mother to daughter)
- (5) Robbi, your bike is working well now. (father to son)
- (6) John, could you please clean the garage? (father to son)
- (7) May I ask you please to pass me the salt? (father to daughter)
- (8) Could you please babysit your little brother? (mother to daughter)

However, in British family, the strategies of politeness of addressing in bottom-up context between children and parents are conducted by using "Mom/Dad", or their first name as in the following situations, when the son addresses his mother in order to bring him a glass of water (9-10), when the son addresses his father for repairing his bike (11-12) and when the son addresses his father after cleaning the garage (13-14):

- (9) Mom, would you please bring me a glass of water? (son to mother)
- (10) Lili, could you please give me a glass of water? (son to mother)
- (11) Dad, could you please repair my bike? (son to father)
- (12) John, may I ask you please to repair my bike? (son to father)
- (13) Dad, the garage is well-cleaned. (son to father)
- (14) George, it's done. (son to father)

Meanwhile, in Persian family, the politeness strategies of addressing in top-down context between parents and children are structured by using "my daughter / my son", name and nickname as in the situations below, when the father addresses his daughter for passing him the salt at dinner table (15-17), when the mother addresses her daughter for babysitting her sibling (18-19), when the father addresses his son after repairing his bike (20-21), and when the father addresses his son for cleaning the garage (22-23):

- (15) My daughter, please pass me the salt. (father to daughter)

دخترم، لطفا نمک رو به من بده.

Dokhtaram, lotfan namak ro be man bede.

- (16) Maryam, pass me the salt. (father to daughter)

مریم، نمک رو به من بده.

Maryam, namak ro be man bede.

- (17) Ati, I need some salt. Give it to me. (father to daughter)

عاطی، من نمک می خوام. اونو به من بده.

Ati, man namak mikham. oo-no be man bede.

- (18) My daughter, I expect you to stay at home and babysit your little brother. (mother to daughter)

دخترم، من ازت انتظار دارم خونه بمونی و از برادر کوچیکت مراقبت کنی.

Dokhtaram, man azat entezar daram khoone bemooni va az baradare koochiket moraghebat koni.

- (19) Taraneh, you know, I could not let your little sister alone at home. Please babysit her. (mother to daughter)

ترانه، میدونی نمی توئم خواهر کوچیکت رو خونه تنها بذارم. لطفا ازش مراقب کن.

Taraneh, midooni nemitoonam khahare koochiketo khoone tanha bezaram. lotfan azash moraghebat kon.

- (20) Your bike is like the first day, my son. (father to son)

دوچرخه ات مثل روز اول شده، پسرم.

Docharkhat mesle rooze aval shode, pesaram.

- (21) Amir, there is no more problem with your bike. It has been already repaired. (father to son)

امیر، دوچرخه ات دیگه مشکل نداره. تعمیر شده.

Amir, docharkhat dige moshkel nadare. ta-mir shode.

(22) Ali, the garage needs to be cleaned. Please clean it. (father to son)

علی، گاراژ باید تمییز شه. لطفا تمییز کن.

Ali, garazh bayad tamiz she. lotfan tamizesh kon.

(23) My son, please clean the garage. (father to son)

پسر م، لطفا گاراژو تمییز کن.

Pesaram, lotfan garazho tamiz kon.

On the other hand, in Persian family, the politeness strategies of addressing in bottom-up context between children and parents are formed only by using “Mom/Dad” as in the situations below, when the son addresses his mother in order to bring him a glass of water (24-25), when the son addresses his father for repairing his bike (26-27), and when the son addresses his father after cleaning the garage (28-29):

(24) Mom, would you mind please doing me a favor and bringing me a glass of water? (son to mother)

مامان، آگه زحمتی نیست لطفا محبت می کنید و برای من یک لیوان آب میارین؟

Maman, age zahmati nist lotfan mohabat mikonid va baraye man yek livan ab miyarin?

(25) Mom, could you please do me a favor and give me a glass of water? (son to mother)

مامان، میتونید لطفا محبت کنید و به من یک لیوان آب بدین؟

Maman, mitoonid lotfan mohabat konid va yek livan ab be man bedin?

(26) Dad, could you please do me a favor and repair my bike? (son to father)

بابا، میتونید لطفا محبت کنید و دوچرخه ام رو تعمیر کنید؟

Baba, mitoonid lotfan mohabat konid va docharkhamo ta-mir konid?

(27) Dad, may I ask you please to do me a favor and repair my bike? (son to father)

بابا، ممکنه ازتون خواهش کنم لطفا محبت کنید و دوچرخه ام رو تعمیر کنید؟

Baba, momkene azatoon khahesh konam lotfan mohabat konid va docharkhamo ta-mir konid?

(28) Dad, as you wanted, the garage is cleaned. (son to father)

بابا، همانطور که خواستید، گاراژ تمییز شده.

Baba, hamoontor ke khastid, garazh tamiz shode.

(29) It's well done, dad. (son to father)

گاراژ تمییز شد، بابا.

Garazh tamiz shod, baba.

Our analysis reveals that in Persian culture, addressing parents by their first names is an impolite and non-appropriate style of addressing. Whereas in British family, politeness strategies of addressing parents are formulated by using their first names besides “Mom” or “Dad”. In fact, in contrary to what we have observed in Persian culture, addressing parents by their first names is perfectly an appropriate and polite form of addressing in British culture.

Conclusion

In this research, our findings reveal that the behavioral strategies of politeness in forms of addressing in top-down (parents to children) and bottom-up (children to parents) contexts in British family are egalitarian. In other words, the forms of addressing of parents towards children and children towards parents are shaped equally in this culture. In order to be more specific, British children not only use “Mom/Dad” in order to address their parents but they may use their parents’ first names. In fact, this form of addressing is equal with the form which is applied by British parents in order to address their children. Based on our findings, addressing parents by their first names by children is an appropriate and polite form of addressing among British families. As a consequence, our results show that there is a low power index in British society.

On the contrary, our results approve, since there is a considerable power distance in Persian society, strategies of politeness in bottom-up context between children and parents are conducted in an elaborately polite manner and children address their parents ONLY by using “Mom” or “Dad”. This form of addressing by Persian children is viewed as a sign of paying respect to their parents. In fact, in Persian culture, addressing parents by their first names is an impolite and non-appropriate form of addressing. This type of behavioral tendency in Persian culture descends from Persian religion and traditions based on which parents are to be highly respected and appreciated and addressing them by their first names has contradiction with their respected dignity and high status in Persian culture.

Other types of speech acts will be undoubtedly our further research topic. Furthermore, different variabilities, such as age, social status, gender and social distance, as the influential and practical elements will be discussed in our further analysis of the speech acts applied to speakers in British and Persian.

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