

An Investigation of the Use of Politeness Strategies in Refusal among Characters with Different Power Relations in English and Farsi Novels

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ABSTRACT

One of the important concerns of communicative way of learning is to be able to convey meaning and not just physical words in a language. The study of speech acts could possibly help achieve this. When using speech acts, one should take into consideration the conversational rules of the language and in order to establish a safe and harmonious conversation, it is better to use certain strategies to eliminate their possible threatening effects. Attempt is made in the present study using a mixed-method design, to investigate the employment of politeness strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987), among the interlocutors with different power relations in English and Farsi novels, when using the speech act of refusal. The speech act of refusal addressed in this study is a face threatening act (FTA) (Brown & Levinson, 1987), which may be used differently by speakers of different languages, with different power relations, in different situations. The materials used are five English and five Farsi novels written by native speakers of English and Farsi. The taxonomy of Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990) were employed in order to categories different types of refusal. The frequency of their use and their percentages were calculated manually. The results indicated that even though reflecting two different cultures, the similarities among the English and Farsi novels regarding the use of both speech acts, were more than the differences. The differences were more obvious in the employment of politeness strategies. The findings of this study will probably give insights into the pragmatic and conversational rules of both languages.

Key words: Pragmatics, Politeness Strategies, Power Relation, Refusal, Individualistic, Collectivistic Culture

INTRODUCTION

Teaching a language is not just teaching its syntactic or semantic properties which deal with the formal structures of language out of context. Focusing only on structural properties and meanings of isolated words does not lead to a communicative way of learning, which is the purpose of all modern theories of learning and teaching and which leads to effective learning in its real sense. To learn a language communicatively, one must know the rules governing the language beyond its structural properties. Rules which help the learner to take into consideration the person whom he is talking with, pay attention to the situation, act in the way that it requires, and choose the best way of conveying his message so as not to destroy the self-image of others. Since different languages call for different ways of approaching this, the teaching situation must be in a way that it provides opportunities for the learner to compare his L1 with the second or foreign language he is learning regarding these issues.

There are several issues within pragmatics, the study of which will probably pave the way for communicative way

of learning and the two of which will be discussed in detail in this paper. The issues of speech act first proposed by Austin (1962) and Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness. Talking about the issue of speech acts, an important point to keep in mind regarding their use is to use them in a way that both to convey the intended message, and also not to harm the self-respect or self-image of the hearer. Generally stated, to convey the message as politely as the context requires. One contextual condition determining the choice of different ways of being polite -politeness strategies- is the social or power status of the interlocutors. The power status of the speaker in relation to the hearer mostly decides for the way he (the speaker) uses a certain speech act. Whether he conveys his message directly or uses mitigating strategies to diminish the amount of imposition put on the other person depends on the power status of the opposite side.

As was mentioned above, different languages and cultures apt for different strategies to approach this issue. Characteristics of culture also decide for the choice of certain strategies by the native speaker of the language possessing that culture. For instance, people of individualistic and col-

refusal. The data were collected from 30 native speakers of Mandarin Chinese in Taiwan (NSC), 30 Chinese EFL learners in Taiwan (EFL), and 30 native speakers of American English in America (NSE). A questionnaire consisting of two major parts: Scaled Response Questionnaire (SRQ) and Discourse Completion Task (DCT) was used as data collection instrument. Perception of face-threat, overall strategy use and strategy patterns were three major terms for analysis. The finding of the study demonstrated that there were some similarities and differences between Chinese and English participants' use of refusals. EFL learners used more strategies and softening devices than Chinese and Americans, due to the fact that they perceived the face-threat by the speech act of refusal greater. It was also demonstrated that, since some L2 native expressions were never used by learners, further instructions are needed to help learners refuse others appropriately.

Another study carried out by Tsuiki Moaveni (2014) investigated the difference in refusal strategies between American and international college students and gender variation. The data were collected from 16 undergraduate American students and 32 international students and were analyzed in terms of frequency, order, and content of semantic formulas. A Discourse Completion Task consisting of six situations were developed in which the participants had to produce refusals for an invitation and a request. The situations involved an email refusal to professors, friends, and a staff member of an academic department. According to the results, all groups preferred to refuse directly when using email. American females preferred expressions of gratitude and stating positive opinions, whereas American male provided reasons and alternatives. The variety of the use of semantic formulas was great among the international students but in contrast to Americans, they lacked positive opinions and providing alternatives. Furthermore, the international students tended to use more regret than the American students and more specific excuses as compared to more general excuses used by the Americans.

According to the studies mentioned above, the issue of politeness when using the speech act of refusal, have been mostly investigated by examining the elicited written or spoken responses of second or foreign language learners of particular languages and in some studies, the responses provided, have been compared with the responses of the native speakers of the language under investigation. Some other studies also compare two different languages in terms of these politeness strategies. In this study, attempt has been made in order to compare the written works of native speakers of English and Farsi concerning politeness strategies which are employed when producing certain speech acts. The main difference of the present study with other studies that have been carried out is that the data obtained here, are not elicited data.

METHODOLOGY

Materials

The materials used in this study are five English and five Farsi novels which are mostly written in modern style by native speakers of the languages.

The English novels are:

- "The Sound and the Fury" by William Faulkner
- "The Lovely Bones" by Alice Sebold
- "The Great Gatsby" by F. Scott Fitzgerald
- "The catcher in the Rye" by J.D. Salinger
- "1984" by George Orwell.

The Farsi novels also are:

- "Savushun" by Simin Daneshvar
- "Symphony of the Dead" by Abbas Maroufi
- "The Colonel" by Mahmoud Dowlatabadi
- "I Will Turn off the Lights" by Zoya Pirzad
- "Her Eyes" by Bozorg Alavi.

Design of the Study

The current study has a mixed method design. It is carried out both quantitatively, using numbers, and qualitatively. The sentences in the both English and Farsi novels which contained the speech act of refusal were investigated qualitatively in order to identify different types of this speech act used by each character. Moreover, politeness strategies employed to mitigate its threatening effects were also investigated taking into consideration the power status of each character in relation to other characters. The data obtained were then presented quantitatively in numbers and percentages and were indicated in separate tables and figures for the sake of clarification

Sampling

Attempt was made to choose the novels in a way that their authors are native speakers of English and Farsi, and also their writing style is modern. This is mostly because their modern style reflects their modern culture and more importantly, modern pragmatic rules reflected on them

Procedures

To begin with, special sentences in the novels which contained an act of refusal were identified and written down. Examples of refusal used in the novels were also categorized using the taxonomy of Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990). The power status of the characters were identified in relation to other characters and were placed in three subcategories of $S > H$ (having higher power status), $S < H$ (having lower power status), and $S = H$ (having an equal power status). The frequency of occurrence of different types of refusal used by the characters in the novels and also different types of politeness strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) which were used by characters to mitigate their threatening effects, were counted and transferred into percentages. The values obtained were then presented in tables and figures, separately for each research question.

Categories of Analysis

In order to analyze the sentences containing the speech act of refusal, a taxonomy proposed by Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990) were employed. In their taxonomy, they divide refusal strategies into two categories: Semantic formulas and

Adjuncts. Semantic formulas are expressions which can be used to perform a refusal, and adjuncts are expressions which accompany a refusal but which cannot by themselves be used to perform a refusal (Houck and Gass, 1999: 12).

It is worthy to note here that, due to not being elicited data, the data contained some extra types which were located under the category of ‘curse’ as an aggravated type of refusing. Since the data coded into this new category, indicated indirect ways of refusing, this new category was placed as the subcategory of ‘indirect’ types. Therefore the taxonomy used in this study is the taxonomy of Beebe et al. (1990) with one single subcategory added to it:

Semantic formulas:

Direct

- a. Performative
- b. Nonperformative

Indirect

- a. Statement of regret
- b. Wish
- c. Excuse, reason, explanation
- d. Statement of alternative
- e. Set condition for future or past acceptance
- f. Promise of future acceptance
- g. Statement of principle
- h. Statement of philosophy
- i. Attempt to dissuade interlocutor
- j. Acceptance that functions as a refusal
- k. Avoidance

l. ‘Curse’

Adjuncts:

- a. Statement of positive opinion/feeling or agreement
- b. Statement of empathy
- c. Pause filler
- d. Gratitude/appreciation

In order to investigate the strategies that characters used to mitigate the damaging effect of this speech act, Brown and Levinson’s (1987) four politeness strategies were employed as framework of analysis:

1. Bald-on record strategies: they are more direct ways of expressing something.
2. Positive politeness strategies: they are used to soften the impact of the damage by the use of a face threatening speech act to the addressee’s positive face by emphasizing closeness between speaker and hearer.
3. Negative politeness strategies: they are used to soften the impact of the damage by the use of a face threatening speech act to the addressee’s negative face by emphasizing the hearer’s freedom of action.
4. Off-record strategies: they are indirect ways of using a speech act so as to save the addressee’s face.

There were also some forms of using these speech acts in which no politeness strategies were employed at all. In these forms, the speech act of refusal was used in aggravated and risky ways, named as ‘high risk of FTA’.

RESULTS

In this section, the research questions are answered separately with reference to the Tables and Figures. As was mentioned above, the taxonomy proposed by Beebe, Takahashi

and Uliss-Weltz (1990) was used as a base for classification of the data with one additional category added to it (curse).

What Refusal Strategies are Mostly Employed in English and Farsi Novels?

This section is an attempt to answer the first question about the types of the speech act of refusal used in English and Farsi novels. Tables 1 and 2 represent the data concerning the use of refusal by the two sets of novels and Figure 1 also kind of repeats the data in a comparative way.

Interestingly, as shown in Tables 1 and 2, both English and Farsi novels have employed an equal number of the speech act

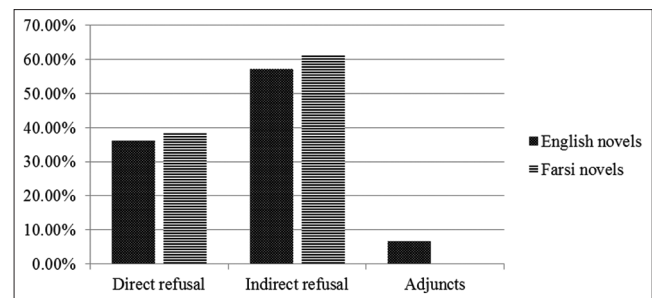


Figure 1. Types of refusal used in English and Farsi novels

Table 1. Types of refusal used in English novels

Types of refusal	Frequencies (percentages)	
(Semantic formulas) Direct		
Performative	1 (0.84)	43 (36.13)
Nonperformative	42 (35.29)	
(Semantic formulas) Indirect		
Statement of regret	5 (4.2)	68 (57.14)
Wish	-	
Excuse, reason, explanation...	26 (21.84)	
Statement of alternative	11 (9.24)	
Set condition for future or past acceptance	4 (3.36)	
Promise of future acceptance	-	
Statement of principle	3 (2.52)	
Statement of philosophy	2 (1.68)	
Attempt to dissuade interlocutor	8 (6.72)	
Acceptance that functions as a refusal	4 (3.36)	
Avoidance	3 (2.52)	
Curse	2 (1.68)	
Adjuncts		
Statement of positive opinion/feeling or agreement	3 (2.52)	8 (6.72)
Statement of empathy	-	
Pause fillers	-	
Gratitude/appreciation	5 (4.2)	
Total	119 (100)	

of refusal (119). The most frequently used category according to Table 1, is ‘nonperformative’ (35.29%) which is a subcategory of ‘direct refusals’. The least frequently used category is ‘performative’ (0.84%), which is a subcategory of ‘direct refusals’ as well. ‘Excuse, reason and explanation’ is the second most frequently used type, having the second highest percentage, (21.84%). The categories of ‘wish’ and ‘promise of future acceptance’ were not at all used as types of refusal in the English novels. In general, refusals were mostly used in indirect than direct ways in English novels (57.14% > 36.13%). A few numbers of adjuncts were also used by English characters (8).

As with English novels, ‘nonperformatives’ have also the highest percentage and are used most frequently in Farsi novels (35.29%) and ‘excuse, reason and explanation’ are second most frequently used type with percentage value of 31.09. The least frequently used category is ‘statement of regret’ with percentage value of 0.84. The data obtained from Farsi novels also indicate that indirect ways of expressing refusals were mostly preferred over direct ways (61.34% > 38.65%). No adjunct is used in Farsi novels.

Table 2. Types of refusal used in Farsi novels

Types of refusal	Frequencies (percentages)	
(Semantic formulas) Direct		
Performative	4 (3.36)	46 (38.65)
Nonperformative	42 (35.29)	
(Semantic formulas) Indirect		
Statement of regret	1 (0.84)	73 (61.34)
Wish	-	
Excuse, reason, explanation...	37 (31.09)	
Statement of alternative	6 (5.04)	
Set condition for future or past acceptance	-	
Promise of future acceptance	-	
Statement of principle	5 (4.2)	
Statement of philosophy	-	
Attempt to dissuade interlocutor	16 (13.44)	
Acceptance that functions as a refusal	2 (1.68)	
Avoidance	3 (2.52)	
Curse	3 (2.52)	
Adjuncts	-	
Statement of positive opinion/feeling or agreement	-	
Statement of empathy	-	
Pause fillers	-	
Gratitude/Appreciation	-	
Total	119 (100)	

Figure 1 also repeats what was presented before about the types of speech act of refusal used by English and Farsi novels. As it is illustrated in the figure, ‘indirect refusals’ are the most frequently used type in both novel sets. Although the frequency of the use of ‘direct refusals’ are less than the indirect ones, the frequency of their use is somehow similar, although not equal, in the novels of both languages.

What Types of Refusal the Characters with Different Power Relations Mostly use in English and Farsi Novels?

This section is an answer to research question two concerning the speech act of refusal. As was mentioned above, the speech act of refusal is a face threatening speech act which threatens the positive face of the requester because when refusing, one says no to the request, invitation, suggestion, etc. of the other. Therefore one’s request, invitation and suggestion is ignored and rejected by the refuser.

The context and specially power relation of the interlocutors play an important role in performing the speech act of refusal as well. The related data are presented in Tables 3, 4, 5 and 6 and Figures 2 and 3. The capital letter ‘S’ shown in the Tables, represents the speaker which here is referred to as the performer of the refusal, refuser. The capital letter ‘H’ also represents the hearer whose request has been rejected.

According to Table 3, in English novels, the characters with higher power status mostly used ‘nonperformatives’ including words like ‘no’ or expressions called negative willingness/ability expressions like, I can’t, I won’t, I don’t, etc., to refuse the request, suggestion, and etc. proposed by characters of lower power status (18.48%). This case is also true about the characters with lower power status (15.12%). Ex-

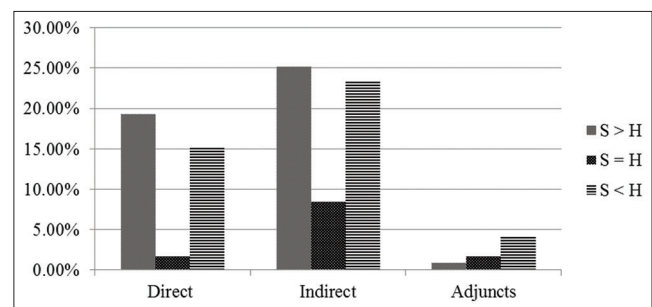


Figure 2. Types of refusal used by characters with different power relations in the English novels

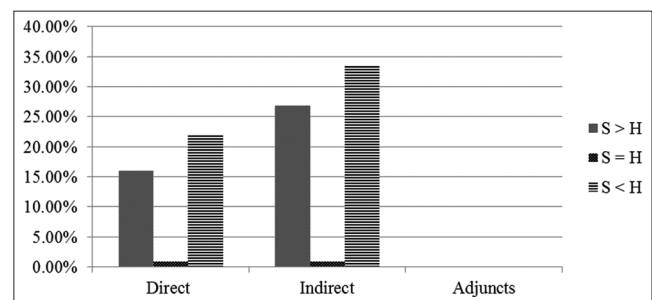


Figure 3. Types of refusal used by characters with different power relations in the Farsi novels

Table 3. Types of refusal used by characters with different power relations in English novels

Types of refusals	Frequencies (percentages)		
	Power relations		
	*S>H	S=H	S<H
(Semantic formulas) Direct			
Performative	1 (0.84)	-	-
Nonperformative	22 (18.48)	2 (1.68)	18 (15.12)
(Semantic formulas) Indirect			
Statement of regret	1 (0.84)	1 (0.84)	3 (2.52)
Wish	-	-	-
Excuse, reason, explanation	10 (8.4)	2 (1.68)	14 (11.76)
Statement of alternative	4 (3.36)	3 (2.52)	4 (3.36)
Set condition for future or past acceptance	4 (3.36)	-	-
Promise of future acceptance	-	-	-
Statement of principle	1 (0.84)	2 (1.68)	-
Statement of philosophy	1 (0.84)	-	1 (0.84)
Attempt to dissuade interlocutor	5 (4.2)	-	3 (2.52)
Acceptance that functions as a refusal	3 (2.52)	1 (0.84)	-
Avoidance	-	-	3 (2.52)
Curse	1 (0.84)	1 (0.84)	-
Adjuncts			
Statement of positive opinion/feeling or agreement	1 (0.84)	1 (0.84)	1 (0.84)
Statement of empathy	-	-	-
Pause fillers	-	-	-
Gratitude/appreciation	-	1 (0.84)	4 (3.36)

*S: Speaker (the one who refuses), H: Hearer (the one whose request is refused)

Table 4. Total use of refusal types by characters with different power relations in English novels

Types of refusal	Power relations		
	Direct (%)	Indirect (%)	Adjuncts (%)
*S>H	23 (19.32)	30 (25.21)	1 (0.84)
S=H	2 (1.68)	10 (8.4)	2 (1.68)
S<H	18 (15.12)	28 (23.52)	5 (4.2)

pressions of ‘excuse, reason, explanation’ were also the most frequently used type employed by characters with higher and lower power status, after the category of ‘nonperformatives’. Table 4 also shows that all characters with different power relations (S > H, S = H and S < H) mostly employed refusals in indirect ways. Characters who had higher power status, used more direct refusal types than characters possessing lower or equal power status.

Figure 2 illustrates what was presented in Table 4. According to the figure and as was mentioned earlier, direct and indirect refusals were most dominantly used types by characters in higher and lower position, in both English and Farsi novels; however, both types were mostly used by characters with higher power status in English novels.

The data obtained from Farsi novels are also similar to the English ones. ‘Nonperformatives’ are also most frequently used by characters with higher (14.28%) and lower

power status (20.16%), as in English novels. ‘Excuse, reason and explanation’ is a second frequently used category employed by speakers possessing higher and speakers possessing lower power status from the hearers. Although the most frequently used type employed by characters with higher and lower power status (nonperformative) is a subcategory of direct refusals and the second mostly used type (excuse, reason and explanation) is an indirect way of refusing, according to Table 6, both characters with higher and lower power status, preferred indirect types over the direct ones. In contrast to English novels, in Farsi novels, interlocutors with lower power status expressed refusals more directly than interlocutors with lower power status.

As shown in the above figure, and as was mentioned before, in contrast to English novels in which both direct and indirect refusals were used by characters with higher power status, in Farsi novels this types were most frequently use by characters with lower power status.

What Politeness Strategies do the Characters in both Languages Employ in Order to Soften the Impact of the Speech act on the Interlocutors’ Face?

The speech act of refusal threatens the addressee’s positive face by saying no to his/her wants and desires and rejecting his/her request. Tables 7 and 8 indicate the frequencies and percentages of the employment of Brown and Levinson’s

Table 5. Types of refusal used by characters with different power relations in the Farsi novels

Types of refusals	Frequencies (percentages)		
	Power relations		
	S>H	S=H	S<H
(Semantic formulas) Direct			
Performative	2 (1.68)	-	2 (1.68)
Nonperformative	17 (14.28)	1 (0.84)	24 (20.16)
(Semantic formulas) Indirect			
Statement of regret	1 (0.84)	-	-
Wish	-	-	-
Excuse, reason, explanation	15 (12.6)	-	22 (18.48)
Statement of alternative	2 (1.68)	1 (0.84)	3 (2.52)
Set condition for future or past acceptance	-	-	-
Promise of future acceptance	-	-	-
Statement of principle	4 (3.36)	-	1 (0.84)
Statement of philosophy	-	-	-
Attempt to dissuade interlocutor	5 (4.2)	-	11 (9.24)
Acceptance that functions as a refusal	1 (0.84)	-	1 (0.84)
Avoidance	2 (1.68)	-	1 (0.84)
Curse	2 (1.68)	-	1 (0.84)
Adjuncts			
Statement of positive opinion/feeling or agreement	-	-	-
Statement of empathy	-	-	-
Pause fillers	-	-	-
Gratitude/appreciation	-	-	-

Table 6. Total use of refusal types by characters with different power relations in Farsi novels

Types of refusal	Power relations		
	Direct (%)	Indirect (%)	Adjuncts (%)
S>H	19 (15.96)	32 (26.89)	-
S=H	1 (0.84)	1 (0.84)	-
S<H	26 (21.84)	40 (33.61)	-

politeness strategies by characters in different positions in English and Farsi novels. The Figures 4 and 5 also illustrate the data presented in the Tables in order to have more general and concrete understanding of the data.

As is indicated in Table 7, all types of politeness strategies to mitigate the threatening effect of refusal are employed by characters in English novels. As can be seen from the Table above, indirect, off-record politeness strategies were mostly employed by characters in all three power relation groups and were somehow equally used by both characters with higher and lower power status (19.32% ~ 18.48%) in English novels. Both positive and negative politeness strategies were mostly, and not at all highly, used by characters who were in lower power status. Characters with higher power status, more frequently employed direct, bald-on politeness strategies (19.32%) and also rude and aggravated ways to express refusals (5.04%) in comparison to other characters; however,

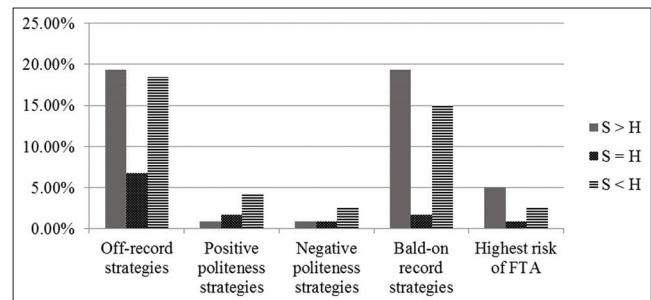


Figure 4. Employment of politeness strategies by characters with different power relations in refusal in English novels

the latter is not very high at all, in comparison to the first. In general, and by referring to Figure 4, off-record strategies were the most dominantly used strategies in English novels; however, both off-record and bald-on record strategies were used equally by characters with higher power status.

In Table 8, we can see that in Farsi novels, the characters who were in lower position, mostly employed off-record, indirect politeness strategies (23.52%). In contrast to English novels, in Farsi novels, there were no examples of employment of positive politeness strategies by characters and negative politeness strategies were just used by one character in high position. Surprisingly, as indicated in the table above, direct, bald-on strategies and direct and rude ways of refus-

Table 7. Employment of politeness strategies by characters with different power relations in refusal in English novels

Power relations	Politeness strategies				
	Off-record strategies (%)	Positive politeness strategies (%)	Negative politeness strategies (%)	Bald-on record strategies (%)	Highest risk of FTA (%)
S>H	23 (19.32)	1 (0.84)	1 (0.84)	23 (19.32)	6 (5.04)
S=H	8 (6.72)	2 (1.68)	1 (0.84)	2 (1.68)	1 (0.84)
S<H	22 (18.48)	5 (4.2)	3 (2.52)	18 (15.12)	3 (2.52)

Table 8. Employment of politeness strategies by characters with different power relations in refusal in Farsi novels

Power relations	Politeness strategies				
	Off-record strategies (%)	Positive politeness strategies	Negative politeness strategies (%)	Bald-on record strategies (%)	Highest risk of FTA (%)
S>H	24 (20.16)	-	1 (0.84)	19 (15.96)	7 (5.88)
S=H	1 (0.84)	-	-	1 (0.84)	-
S<H	28 (23.52)	-	-	26 (21.84)	12 (10.08)

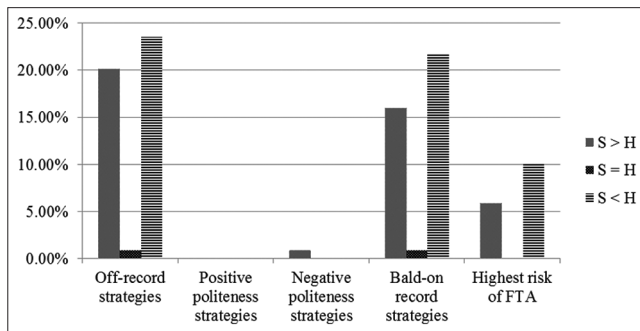


Figure 5. Employment of politeness strategies by characters with different power relations in refusal in Farsi novels

ing were mostly used by characters with lower power status in comparison to characters in higher position (bald-on strategies: 21.84% > 15.96%), (Highest risk of FTA: 10.08% > 5.88%). Generally saying and with regard to Figure 5, like in English novels, in Farsi novels, off-record strategies were also the most frequently used strategy in Farsi novels.

DISCUSSION

To answer the first research question, it can be said that the employment of the types of refusal is generally similar in English and Farsi novels. The differences can be seen in the frequencies and the employment of the sub-types. In both English and Farsi novels, indirect way of refusing is the most favored type that is used by characters, however; the employment of direct refusals is also high. Even though their data collection instruments were different from that of the present study, the results for researches conducted by Allami and Naeimi (2011) and Tabatabaei (2014) are also supportive of the choice of indirect types over the direct ones among English and Persian interlocutors. Being equal in numbers, excuses, reasons or explanations are used more in Farsi novels than English ones which is also in line with the results obtained by Allami and Naeimi (2011). There are some ev-

idence of employment of adjuncts in English novels but no adjuncts are used in Farsi novels. In general, due to the variety of indirect ways of refusing, and in order to maintain a safe and harmonious conversation, indirect types are preferred over the direct ones.

With regard to research question 2, it might be interesting to say that in both English and Farsi novels, the characters in all three groups of power relations used indirect types more than direct ones. However, the use of nonperformative types by characters, as a subcategory of direct refusals (the most frequently used sub-type of direct types), are more than employment of excuses, reasons or explanations (the most frequently used sub-type of indirect types) in both novel sets. Since the number of refusals used in English novels are exactly equal to Farsi novels, we can say that in Farsi novels the frequency of the use of indirect refusals by characters in all three power relation groups are more than English novels. Characters in lower position in English novels also employed more adjuncts than other characters due to their low power status in relation to others which mostly decided for their choice of being more polite by using mitigating devices.

The results regarding the research question 3 indicate that in contrast to the findings of the study conducted by Hosseini (2014), which suggest that Persian native speakers are more careful about the choice of politeness strategies than American native speakers, majority of the characters in all three power relation groups and in both novel sets (English and Farsi) used indirect and off-record strategies when refusing. Off-record strategies do not include all of the indirect types of refusals which were presented in Rees-Miller’s taxonomy. Types such as, ‘excuse, reason, explanation’, ‘statement of alternative’, ‘set condition for future or past acceptance’, ‘statement of principle’, ‘statement of philosophy’, ‘acceptance that functions as a refusal’, and ‘avoidance’, are mostly accompanied by off-record strategies. These indirect or better say off-record strategies are mostly used by characters in higher positions than the addressee in English novels. In contrast to English novels, in Farsi novels, these indirect or

off-record strategies are mostly employed by characters in lower position. This case is the same with direct or bald-on strategies which include types such as, performatives and nonperformatives as well. Direct strategies are mostly used by characters with higher power status in English novels and by characters with lower power in Farsi novels. It can be explained that due to their high power status, characters in higher position have more freedom in using these strategies than others. The use of these direct strategies by characters in lower position might also account for the deciding role of context or situations in which the characters are embedded in. English characters use positive and negative politeness strategies as well but they are not evidently employed in Farsi novels. The frequency of the use of these strategies is not very high in comparison to other strategies. Characters with high level of power status in English novels, and characters with low level of power status in Farsi novels, use threatening and strong versions of refusal strategies which are of high risk of threat.

To interpret the findings regarding the fourth research question, it is worth to mention that with regard to the characteristics of both individualistic and collectivistic cultures, Iranian people possess collectivistic culture, which emphasizes community and English people possess individualistic culture which regards the 'self'. However due to the fact that according to the findings concerning the previous research questions, there are more similarities than differences between the characters of the novels in both languages in using types of refusal, and also the fact that in most cases, the direct strategies were mostly used by the characters with lower power status, in Farsi novels, the results in some cases might not be completely explained merely with regard to the characteristics of the two cultures. This might account for the fact that because the contextual factors other than power relations of the characters in the novels are not considered as variables in this study, the effect of their presence which might be stronger than the relationships of characters, are not completely taken into consideration. These contextual effects might change the relation of the characters, allowing the interlocutors in higher position or power to act more politely with people of lower power from their own, or give the characters with lower power status the courage to act rudely with people who are in higher position than them. According to Crystal (1989) and Mezulánik (1998) as cited in Köksal, "pragmatics is related to stylistics and sociolinguistics in their study of social relationships existing between participants, and of the way extra-linguistic setting, activity, and subject matter can restrain the choice of language features and varieties" (p.634).

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The current research was an attempt to investigate the use of different types of speech act of refusal by native speakers of English and Farsi and the use of politeness strategies employed by the characters to mitigate the damaging effect due to power inconsistency among the interlocutors. The taxonomy proposed by Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990) was employed to categorize the refusal types and in order

to identify the mitigating strategies, Brown and Levinsons' (1987) politeness strategies were used. The results indicated that the differences between the two languages were reflected on the employment of politeness strategies more than the use of refusal types.

Generally speaking, by taking into consideration the fact that mastering syntactic and semantic rules of a language does not guarantee mastering its communicational rules and generally, its use, and also the reality that different languages have different pragmatic rules that are culture-specific, language pedagogy should raise the awareness of students by evaluating the pragmatic rules dominant in the language that the learners are learning and comparing them with the learners' native language to detect the similarities and differences. It's up to the researchers and mostly to the teachers to study deeply in the both languages and get insights into the communicational rules used by the native speakers of each.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

As with any other study, this study also has limitations which are better to be mentioned. One of the limitations of the study is that the power status of the interlocutors was the only external factor which was mostly taken into consideration. Factors other than power relations can definitely influence the choice of certain strategies over others. Furthermore, since the novels mostly had different settings and the events mostly happened in different situations, the results obtained might not be truly generalizable to other situations and settings.

Taking into consideration the issues mentioned, the researchers who are interested in this domain and want to use written works and especially fictional types as their research materials, can examine the effect of other external factors on the use of these politeness strategies. Furthermore, they can use written works other than novels or novels of different genres. It is also highly recommended that the future researchers investigate other speech acts or even other languages as well. Since the issue of gender was not considered as a variable in this study, it would be a good idea for other researchers to consider the gender of authors or the characters as a variable as well. One suggestion might be that they choose the novels with equal numbers of female and male authors or any other ways indicating a gender-based study.

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