

1.0. Introduction

In this section a brief background about pragmatics and speech acts will be proposed. Moreover, the statement of the problem, significance of the study, purpose of the study including research questions and research hypotheses will be discussed. At last, the definitions of some key terms will be provided and the limitations of the study will be mentioned.

1.1. Background

Culture and language are closely interwoven in a way that sociocultural values determine our way of thinking and speaking (Sapir, 1949; Whorf, 1956, as cited in Liu, 1995). Communicatively appropriate interaction in every language entails grammatical as well as sociolinguistic competence (Canale & Swain, 1980; Paulston, 1974; Richards, 1980; Schmidt & Richards, 1980). As Yorio (1980) stated, every language speaker should utilize the language grammatically, appropriately, and effectively; grammaticality is involved with formality of language, whereas appropriateness and effectiveness refer to sociolinguistic aspects of language. In fact, successful communication in a language requires not only the grammar and vocabulary knowledge but also pragmatic competence and cultural knowledge. In other words, pragmatic competence has been regarded as one of the integral aspects of communicative competence (Bachman, 1990). Kim and Hall (2002, p. 332) quoting Davis (1989) defined pragmatic competence as “knowing how to connect utterances to locally situated circumstances, and thus is an integration of both linguistic and cultural knowledge”. On the other hand, interlanguage pragmatic (ILP) studies have absorbed significant attention within pragmatic competence realm, most of which have been involved with realization of different speech acts. Thus, speech act studies appear to be crucial in understanding intercultural studies. Austin (1962) defined speech acts as the acts we do in our utterances such as ordering, requesting, complaining, apologizing, suggesting, etc.

Many people face communication conflict or even communication breakdown in their cross-linguistic and cross-cultural interactions with people from different language backgrounds. Thomas (1983) called this communication breakdown as “pragmatic failure”, in which learners transfer their native language pragmatic norms into the target language. Wolfson (1981, p. 141) defined pragmatic transfer as “the use of rules of speaking from one’s own native speech community when interacting with members of the host community or simply when speaking or writing in a second language”. As Grossi (2009) mentioned, such transfer results in stereotyping some cultures to the extent that its speakers may be even considered as impolite.

Chick (1996, as cited in Yousefvand, 2010) detected such intercultural miscommunication in various value systems evoked by speakers’ L1 cultural background. Different value systems might be revealed in speech act patterns; some scholars (e.g. Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969) maintain that speech acts are organized by universal principles, whereas some others (Green, 1975; Wierzbicka, 1985) emphasize the variations in speech act verbalization and conceptualization across different cultures. Therefore, a great deal of studies have been conducted across different languages to hypothesize the universalities and variations in regard to different speech acts such as request (Belza, 2008), apology (Fahey, 2005), complaint (Salmani-Nodoushan, 2007), compliment (Wolfson, 1981) and refusal (Felix-Brasdefer, 2008).

Kasper (1984, as cited in Jalilifar, 2009, p.790) mentioned what second language learners demand to acquire for an appropriate pragmatic performance in a "top down processing" manner:

Learners first have to recognize the extra-linguistic, cultural constraints that operate in a native speaker's choice of a particular speech act appropriate to the context. They also have to know how to realize this speech act at the linguistic level and in accordance with the L2 sociocultural norms. (p. 3)

Therefore, as Grossi (2009) mentioned, learners can be taught sociocultural rules in order to become cognizant of cultural values.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Although speech act patterns are to some extent universal, learners of a new language should learn a number of essential issues. They need to learn particular applications of universal forms which are different across different cultures; they need to be informed about which speech acts are threatening in a special culture. Schmidt and Richards (1980) added that learners should also be cognizant of the certain contexts associated with certain speech acts.

Learners are not necessarily cognizant of a complex speech performance. As a matter of fact, Bardovi-Harling (2001, as cited in Martinez-Flor & Fukuya, 2005) mentioned that there is a wide gap between first language learners and second language learners in both understanding and production of speech acts. As Jiang (2006) stated the pragmatic competence of second language learners often fall below the expectations and even the most proficient learners seem to have difficulty with L2 pragmatics. Therefore, the role of a teacher or a researcher can be to suggest some information on how native speakers perform certain important speech acts.

Since each speech act offers a variety of possible language samples, learners may respond in the way they would in their native language and culture and make inappropriate utterances. It is not an easy task to get the students to make the proper speech act in the proper context (Fernandez Guerra & Martinez-flor, 2005), specially in EFL contexts. Therefore, according to Martinez-flor and Fukuya (2005), it seems a good suggestion to integrate pragmatics into foreign language classroom to improve learners' pragmatic competence.

Moreover, as Liu and Zhao (2007) indicated, we regularly use suggestions in our daily interactions. We receive suggestions from different people: we may receive personal suggestions from our friends or relatives, we may get professional suggestions from doctors or professors. Suggestions also arise in educational environments such as a class in which students ask for teachers' help and hints. Being

informed of intricacies of suggestion speech act, we should be cautious while suggesting (Liu & Zhao, 2007). Non-natives may not be cognizant of the different influence of direct or indirect suggestions.

Some speech acts such as apologies, requests, complaints and compliments have been frequently investigated in the field of pragmatics, whereas speech act of suggestion has received scant attention. This demonstrates that “there are very few suggestions on how to teach suggestions” (Fernandez Guerra & Martinez-Flor, 2005, P. 94).

Generally, regarding the literature there are small number of studies on suggestion speech act which indicate learners have difficulty in forming appropriate pragmatic patterns. Their suggestions are considered as direct, unmitigated and sometimes even rude (Jiang, 2006); for instance, one of the suggestion linguistic devices is to apply the modals. It seems that EFL Iranian learners have difficulty in using the modals and differentiating them accordingly, specially in regard to the force of utterances. Therefore, this study intends to conduct a comparative research based on suggestion speech act between Persian as EFL learners’ home language and English as their target language.

1.3. Significance of the Study

Communication misunderstanding and communication breakdown occur due to cross-cultural, social or individual variances in communicative competence for instance, different rules of a kind of speech act. Such misunderstanding can be avoided by investigating the discourse patterns. Thus, understanding and practicing speech acts would develop learners’ pragmatic ability to produce appropriate target speech.

According to Schmidt and Richards (1980), the main contribution of speech act theory is explanation of communicative competence. In fact, it “substantiates the concept empirically” (Schmidt & Richards, 1980, p. 141) and indicates how language is used beyond the sentence level; in other words, it focuses on the learning as the

process rather than a product. Pragmatic speech acts such as apologies, requests, refusals, and suggestions are significant components of communicative competence. Different approaches analyzing communicative competence have considered pragmatic competence as the basic component (e.g. Bachman, 1990; Canale & Swain, 1980). On the other hand, within pragmatic competence increasing attention has been drawn to ILP studies most of which have been carried out on the production of different speech acts.

Language learners repeatedly deal with the need to utilize different speech acts such as apologies, requests, complaints, etc., each of which constitutes a series of linguistic strategies. Although defining different speech acts has been established since the 1960s (Meijers, 2007), recently there has been a shift towards empirical studies which focus on perception and production of various speech acts by EFL or ESL learners. Considering different speech acts, SLA researchers have become interested in a set of samples in which native speakers of a target language use for speech acts (e.g. Sharifian, 2005; Trosborg, 1987).

Moreover, learners' improper pragmatic competence is due to incomplete input provided by pedagogical materials. Arranging comprehensive input to learners is a major business of classroom instruction. Thus, another concern is to translate speech act analysis into units to be applicable by syllabus designers. Many syllabus designers such as Wilkins (1976) and Munby (1978) used speech act and speech event theories in their syllabuses (Schmidt & Richards, 1980).

Within the last few years great deals of studies have been carried out related to speech acts in a variety of languages and cultures (e.g. Allami & Naeimi, 2010; Yu, 2005). Therefore, this study intends to make a contrastive comparison of suggestion speech act between Persian and English.

At last, speech act findings not only inform teachers of the cognitive states of students but also might be beneficial in other domains as well such as preparing dictionaries, and teacher training courses.

1.4. Purpose of the Study

According to Wierzbicka (1985) speech act studies have suffered from ethnocentrism and there is a necessity to include non-western cultures (Blum-kulka, House & Kasper, 1989, as cited in Afghari & Kaviani, 2005). The present study is a contribution to such a need. Therefore, to expand the cross-cultural literature, this study is an attempt to compare and contrast English and Persian suggestion speech act in order to detect the cross-cultural values. In fact, this study compares three data sets of L1 (Persian natives), IL (interlanguage data) and L2 (English natives) to extract Iranians' suggestion linguistic devices and compare them with those of English native speakers stated in previous literature.

Furthermore, many pragmatic studies have been involved with investigating the influential factors in speech act performance such as gender (e.g. Allami, 2006; Bryant Smith, 2009; Sum-hung Li, 2010), and proficiency (e.g. Allami & Naimi, 2010; Nguyen, 2007; Wannaruk, 2008). Thus, this study aims to investigate gender influence and probe whether participants with higher language proficiency levels have a better pragmatic competence with respect to their suggestions. Finally, some guidelines will be proposed to improve the present situation of teaching speech acts.

1.4.1. Research Questions

Q1: What are the similarities and differences between English natives and Persian natives in the production of suggestion speech act in Persian and English languages?

Q2: What are the similarities and differences between English natives and Iranian EFL learners in the production of English suggestion speech act?

Q3: Is there any significant difference between Persian natives in their Persian suggestion speech act and Iranian EFL learners in their English suggestion speech act?

Q4: Is there any significant difference between Persian native males and females in their production of Persian suggestion speech act?

Q5: Is there any significant difference between Iranian EFL males and females in their production of English suggestion speech act?

Q6: Is there any significant difference between Iranian EFL learners of different proficiency levels in their production of English suggestion speech act?

1.4.2. Research Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant difference between Persian natives in their Persian suggestion speech act and Iranian EFL learners in their English suggestion speech act?

Ho2: There is no significant difference between Persian native males and females in their production of Persian suggestion speech act?

Ho3: There is no significant difference between Iranian EFL males and females in their production of English suggestion speech act?

Ho4: There is no significant difference between Persian EFL learners of different proficiency levels in their production of suggestion speech act.

1.5. Definitions of Some Key Terms

Culture: The set of practices, codes, and values that mark a particular nation or group: the sum of a nation or group's most highly thought of works of literature, art, music, etc. (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 138).

Pragmatic Competence: Speakers' knowledge and use of rules of appropriateness and politeness which dictate the way speaker will understand and formulate speech acts (Koike, 1989, p. 279).

Pragmatic Transfer: The use of rules of speaking from one's own native speech community when interacting with members of the host community or simply when speaking or writing in a second language is known as sociolinguistic or pragmatic transfer (Wolfson, 1981, p. 141).

Speech Act: All the acts we perform through speaking, all the things we do when we speak (Schmidt & Richards, 1980, P. 1).

Suggestion Speech Act: The speaker mentions an idea, possible plan or action for other people to consider; or offers an opinion about what other people should do or how they should act in a particular situation, and believes that the action indicated is in the best interest of the hearer, or is desirable for the hearer to do. (Jiang, 2006, p. 41).

1.6. Limitations of the Study

This study involved small number of participants. Therefore, its generalizability may not extend beyond this study. Using DCT to glean the research data, we should mention that since learners must provide written answers, what learners are supposed to say in a certain situation may not be parallel to what they would truly say in that setting (Golato, 2003, as cited in Martinez-Flor, 2006). Moreover, other social variables such as age, social class, and educational background may be attended.

2.0. Introduction

This chapter includes discussion and presentation of theoretical and empirical frameworks. The former deals with main theoretical issues within pragmatics, whereas the latter considers the previous researches conducted on the realization of different speech acts.

2.1. Theoretical Framework

Many researchers focus on the need for the rules of producing “communicatively appropriate performance” (e.g. Schmidt & Richards, 1980, P. 1; Uso-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2008) as well as proper development of pragmatic competence (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1996; Celce-Murcia, Dornyei & Thurrell, 1995, as cited in Fernandez Guerra & Martinez-Flor, 2005). As a matter of fact, many learners may not be aware of socially and culturally appropriate forms which may lead to communication break down or communication conflict. Therefore, according to Schmidt and Richards (1980), we should try to appreciate a theory which accounts for language use among which speech act theory plays a crucial role.

Austin (1962) characterized three levels for each speech act utterance: act of saying something, what one does in saying it, and what one does by saying it which respectively match with locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. In fact, locutionary act deals with an utterance whose meaning can be recognized; in illocutionary act the emphasis is on the speaker’s intention; perlocutionary act is concerned with the effect that is produced by saying that utterance.

2.1.1. Pragmatics

Richards and Schmidt (2002, p. 412) defined pragmatics as “the study of the use of language in communication, particularly the relationship between sentences and the contexts and situations in which they are used”. They also stated that pragmatics includes both speech act perception and production. Martinez-Flor and Uso-Juan

(2006) regarded pragmatics as a linguistic concept related to language use which involves speakers' intentions while communicating utterances in particular contexts and considered the notion of pragmatics as a reaction to Chomsky's abstract construct of language in which grammar played a predominant role. Pragmatics has also been implemented in the field of second language acquisition and more specifically in the construction of SLA models (Celce-Murcia et al, 1995, as cited in Fernandez Guerra & Martinez-Flor, 2005; Martinez-Flor & Uso-Juan, 2006). To perform speech acts appropriately two types of knowledge are required: sociocultural and sociolinguistic knowledge (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1983 as cited in Uso-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2008). The former indicates when to perform a speech act and what is appropriate in a certain condition, whereas the latter is concerned with linguistic forms related to the speech act.

2.1.2. Speech Act Theory

Speech act theory is concerned with uses of language. Schmidt and Richards (1980) proposed that generally speech act includes all the acts we do while speaking, though this is a broad definition. We use language to request, to order, to criticize, to joke and so on. Gass (1995, p. 1, as cited in Ohata, 2004) also defined speech act as "the performance of a certain act through words".

Hymes (1972) introduced the boundary between speech situations, speech events, and speech acts. According to Schmidt and Richards (1980), speech situations are those situations in the community who are related to speech for instance fights, meals, etc. Speech events include activities that are controlled by some kinds of rules for making speech such as lectures and religious rituals which are closely tied with the concept of genre. Speech acts, the minimal concept in this set, are the acts we do when we communicate such as ordering, criticizing, requesting, and suggesting.

2.1.3. Types of Speech Act

Most of interaction sequences consist of several connected and interdependent speech acts. Clyne (1994) suggested that the relation between them is not so routinized. Such sequences are called complex and are labeled according to their focal speech act. Thus, we return to more traditional classifications to categorize intercultural variations more efficiently. Searle (1976) differentiated pragmatic speech acts into five categories of representatives (we tell people how things are), directives (get people to do something), commissives (the speaker is committed to do something), expressives (feelings and attitudes are conveyed), and declarations (they cause a change to happen).

2.1.4. Indirect and Nonliteral Speech Acts

The content of a locutionary act is not always determined by what the sentence expresses. In addition to direct utterances, we can perform speech acts indirectly. Richards and Schmidt (2002, p. 253) defined indirect speech act as “A speech act in which the communicative intention is not reflected in the linguistic form of the utterance.” and regarded it as more polite way of doing certain types of acts like request. According to Asher and Lascarides (2001), in indirect speech act, one speech act is utilized to express the meaning of another act; for instance, we can make a request by stating a statement. Speech acts can also be performed literally or nonliterally which in the latter we do not mean what our words convey but something beyond that. Nonlinearity and indirectness are two sources in which the semantic content of a sentence cannot determine its illocutionary act.

2.1.5. Suggestion Speech Act

We regularly use suggestions in our daily interactions in different settings. They are frequently employed in educational environments as well. Generally, a suggestion is a directive type of speech act stated as a possibility by the speaker which is believed to be desirable for the hearer to perform a future course of action (Sum-

Hung Li, 2010). According to Jiang (2006), in a suggestion the speaker offers an idea or action for other people to consider or suggests an opinion about what other people should do in a certain situation and believe the mentioned action is in the benefit of the hearer. As Banerjee and Carrell (1988, p. 319) stated, several concerns should be observed while making suggestions: “urgency of the suggestion”, “degree of embarrassment in the situation”, and “social distance and power between speaker and the hearer”. Whether suggestions are regarded as proper depends on the “authority and expertise of speaker and the intimacy between speaker and addressee” (Decapua & Huber, 1995, as cited in Liu & Zohao, 2007, p. 59). Thus, the speaker should try to mitigate the effect of offence on the hearer by some politeness devices. Regarding the intricate complexities of this speech act in different cultures, it seems essential to investigate suggestion expressions in discourse patterns of different languages.

2.1.6. Major Issues in Speech Act Theory

2.1.6.1. Universals

One of the important questions in the study of speech acts is that whether speech acts are universal, and if so, which aspects of them are universal. Can we consider the same speech act taxonomy for all languages? Many scholars have scrutinized speech act universality across a number of different languages (e.g. Fraser, 1978, as cited in Schmidt & Richards, 1980; Matsumoto, 1988; Yu, 2003). According to Schmidt and Richards (1980), the most significant discussion for universality of speech act samples is posited by Brown and Levinson (1978). They discussed that speech acts are somewhat threatening to either speaker or hearer continuing that speakers should consider some elements such as social distance, degree of power, ranking of imposition in a special culture and then choose some linguistic strategies to perform the act. According to Brown and Levinson (1978, as cited in Schmidt & Richards, 1980), speakers may utilize a strategy of positive politeness by assuring the hearer that he is valued. On the other hand, they may choose a negative politeness strategy by redressing the threat for instance by being indirect or apologizing. Also, they

scrutinized speech act universality in three distinct languages and found much parallelism among them in regard to politeness. Schmidt and Richards (1980) indicated that speech act linguistic devices will be universal if only they are expressed in general terms; for instance, all languages have some verbs which are used in performative acts, although this does not mean that there should be a literal translation for each verb.

2.1.6.2. Pragmatic Transfer

ILP is one of the significant concepts in second language acquisition which investigates how learners' pragmatic competence develops (Kasper, 1992, as cited in Wannaruk, 2008). Many studies demonstrated non-native learners' gap in their pragmatic performance in comparison with native speakers (e.g. Alcon Soler & Codina Espurz, 2002; Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Wannaruk, 2008) which may be due to their incompetence in L2 sociolinguistic rules (Kwon, 2003, as cited in Wannaruk, 2008). Consequently, they compensate this gap utilizing their native sociolinguistic norms while communicating in L2; hence, pragmatic transfer may occur. "Pragmatic transfer in interlanguage pragmatics shall refer to the influence exerted by learners' pragmatic knowledge of languages and cultures other than L2 on their comprehension, production, and learning of L2 pragmatic information" (Kasper, 1992, p. 209, as cited in Bou Franch, 1998). Therefore, learners' insufficient knowledge of L2 sociolinguistic rules and their pragmatic transfer from their first language may lead to communication breakdown. As Richards (1980, p. 430) stated

Transfer of features of first language conversational competence into English may have much more serious consequences than errors at the levels of syntax or pronunciation, because conversational competence is closely related to the presentation of self, that is communicating an image of oneself to others.

Therefore, transferring from their L1, learners might be regarded as rude or even inconsiderate which indicates the necessity of implementing instruction in pragmatics for the non-native learners to acquire the pragmatic competence.

2.1.6.3. Teaching Pragmatic Aspects

Learners' success in producing appropriate target language in various contexts has been an important concern of many researchers who have focused on proper development of pragmatic competence. As a matter of fact, many learners may not be aware of socially and culturally appropriate forms which may lead to communication breakdown or communication conflict. Therefore, Fernandez Guerra and Martinez-Flor (2005) discussed the contribution of instruction in the development of pragmatic competence. Language learners can perform successfully on the condition that their pragmatic universals are transferred positively, though Kasper (2001, as cited in Fernandez Guerra & Martinez-Flor, 2005) stated that learners may not know how to use the knowledge they obtained in L1 and necessitated interference of pragmatic instruction in foreign language classrooms. Many scholars emphasized the interference of pragmatic pedagogy for learners to develop appropriate pragmatic performances (e.g. Koike & Pearson, 2005; Martinez-flor & Fukuya, 2005). Therefore, there is a growing body of research on teaching pragmatics (Grossi, 2009; Rose, 2005; Vahid Dastjerdi & Farshid, 2011).

2.1.6.4. Pragmatic Classroom Techniques

Kasper (1997, as cited in Eslami-Rasekh, 2005) suggested two types of activities to develop learners' pragmatic competence. First, activities which raise students' pragmatic awareness; second, activities in which learners are given the opportunity to practice the communicative acts. Martinez-Flor and Uso-Juan (2006) proposed some techniques to foster learners' pragmatic competence in second language including learners' understanding of the importance of pragmatics, learners' awareness of the appropriate use of L1 speech acts, learners' knowledge of the pragmalinguistic forms of L2 speech acts, learners' awareness of the appropriate use of L2 speech acts,

learners' production of L2 speech acts, and learners' provision of feedback on their production of L2 speech acts.

2.1.6.5. Collecting Data on Pragmatic Development

Kasper and Roever (2005) classified data collecting procedures in ILP into three categories including observational data of spoken interaction, self-reported questionnaire data, and oral and/or narrative self reports. The first category informs us how participants understand and produce pragmatic constructions and how they perform in various contexts. All types of questionnaires fall under the category of self-reported questionnaire data such as DCTs which are employed frequently as a pragmatic assessment tool. Kasper and Roever (2005) regarded questionnaires as offline categories, since participants do not understand or produce pragmatic samples under the real world interaction variables. Kasper and Rose (2002, as cited in Martinez-Flor, 2006) also divided the major methodological approaches utilized in pragmatic studies into three categories: those examining spoken discourse, different types of questionnaires, oral and written forms of self report.

2.2. Empirical Framework

We are confronted with diverse cultures and diverse languages. Understanding the variations is not always easy. So it is crucial to investigate the cultural differences between languages. Felix-Brasdefer (2008) divided existing studies of speech acts into two main categories: 1) studies which scrutinize the realization of native speakers' speech act which may bring to focus one or two languages, 2) studies involved with non-natives' realization of speech acts. Moreover, there exists another category which investigates the effect of instruction on learners' ILP competence. As Martinez-flor and Fukuya (2005) stated research in this field has been divided into two kinds of studies: 1) those empirical studies which examine the teachability of various pragmatic facets in addition to different speech acts (e.g. Eslami-Rasekh, Eslami-Rasekh & Fatahi, 2004; Trosborg, 2003; Yoshimi, 2001), 2) the empirical

studies which investigate the effect of pedagogical issues on pragmatic development introducing the distinction between explicit and implicit instructions (Fukuya & Zhang, 2002; Martinez-Flor & Alcon Soler, 2007; Vahid Dastjerdi & Rezvani, 2010).

2.2.1. Studies Carried out on Persian Language

Eslami Rasekh (1993) investigated request speech act patterns of American and Persian natives. Degree of directness was regarded as well. Research data was gleaned via a DCT. Results showed that Persian speakers were more direct and used more alerters, supportive moves, and internal modifiers than Americans. In fact, it was discussed that Persians utilized such linguistic devices to compensate for the level of directness.

Yamini (1995) studied compliment speech act regarding sex-linked differences in form, type, content, and frequency of compliments. Therefore, 21 field workers collected the compliment samples. The findings were compared with American compliments to probe the differences and similarities. The study results indicated sex-related differences across Persian compliments in several areas such as use of intensifiers, lexical choice, syntactic forms etc.

Janani (1996) studied the pragmatic failure of Iranian EFL students in expressing gratitude. A DCT was distributed to 60 English native speakers in London and 60 Iranian senior students of English. The results indicated that gratitude expressions employed by EFL learners varied from those of English natives and resembled those of native Persian speakers.

Keshavarz (2001) investigated the effect of social context, intimacy, and distance on the forms of address in Persian. Furthermore, variation of address forms was probed in regard to social characteristics of the speakers. The results suggested that the use of intimate terms of address is pro-portional to social distance and the formality of context; as social distance and degree of formality of context increased, the frequency of familiar terms of address decreased.

Akbari (2002) studied politeness principles in Persian. The study investigated the range of politeness devices by Persian mono-lingual speakers and compared them with those of English people on the basis of the model proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). The research data was gleaned through an open-ended DCT composed of written situations and a brief description of the interlocutors' characteristics. Participants consisted of two groups of male and female university students. It was concluded that parallels can be revealed between the languages mentioned in the Brown and Levinson's (1987) study and Persian in regard to the expression of politeness.

Koutlaki (2002) investigated offers, expressions of thanks, and Persian ritual politeness (*'ta'arof'*) samples. In addition, social organization in Iranian society, Persian face, which consists of two interrelated concepts of *'shakhsiyat'* (pride) and *'ehteram'* (honour) were considered. The research data was obtained by recording naturally occurring data, field notes and interviews. The study findings indicated some acts which have been classified as face threatening acts by Brown and Levinson (1987) should be regarded as face enhancing acts in Persian.

Taleghani-Nikazm (2002) examined ritual routines focusing on the ritual of "how are you" in Iran and Germany in telephone conversation openings. The research data was extracted on the basis of a corpus of 87 audio-taped telephone calls in Iran, 56 audio-taped German telephone calls and 45 audio-taped telephone calls between native speakers of German and Iranian non-native speakers of German in Germany. The results demonstrated significant variations within two cultures. Additionally, findings indicated that Persian non-natives of German transferred from their native telephone conversation opening routines to their conversations with German natives.

Yaghoobi (2002) examined requesting patterns employed by ESL PhD students in Email writing. The study also explored the influence of two controlled contextual constraints, namely status and distance. Participants consisted of three groups of Persian natives, Persian EFL learners, and English natives. The main research tool was a DCT. The results of the analysis illuminated that the ESL learners' requestive samples were similar to that of English natives at the main level, although Iranian performance

varied at sub-types. Additionally, they showed different sensitivity to the controlled contextual constraints.

Yarmohammadi (2003) investigated the politeness strategies comparing Persian and English language on the basis of Brown and Levinson (1987)'s framework. In fact, the study regarded politeness within speech acts of favor asking, griping and complaint across the Persian and British English communities. This study also attempted to investigate the influential variables in speech act performance including power, ranking of imposition and gender. The participants involved British native speakers of English, Tehrani advanced learners of English, and Tehrani monolingual speakers of Persian including both males and females who were given a DCT comprising 24 situations. The study results revealed significant variations between the three groups in their pragmatic performances. The Persian natives and EFL learners have utilized more indirect strategies demonstrating non-natives' transfer of their native norms to the second communication. Moreover, regarding English natives the interlocutor's gender had no significant effect on their performance, whereas for Persian natives and EFL learners it was a significant factor and the size of imposition was important for all the three groups, contrary to power which was effective for Iranian EFL and English natives.

Eslami-Rasekh (2004) compared Persian speakers' use of face-keeping strategies in reaction to complaints with American English speakers' performance and discussed them in terms of different cultural concepts. The study findings demonstrated that Persian speakers vary their face-keeping strategies according to contextual factors, whereas English speakers mainly apply one apology linguistic device and intensify it based on contextual factors.

Eslami-Rasekh et al. (2004) explored the effect of explicit instruction on EFL students' comprehension of speech acts. Participants involved the Iranian undergraduate students of teaching English who were divided into experimental and control group. Teacher-fronted discussions, cooperative grouping, role plays and some other activities were employed in order to facilitate speech acts learning and a pretest-