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 a 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 massage, 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-

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lectivistic cultures, use different strategies when using a certain speech act (here refusal) differently. Therefore in order for the learners to get familiar with the strategies used by different native speakers, they must be provided with opportunities to be placed in authentic contexts or study authentic materials.

Although several studies have been carried out which examine the use of these strategies by SL or FL learners of a certain language (here English and Farsi), comparing them with the performance of the participants in their mother tongue, or performance of the native speakers of the language they are learning, it is not always easy to access the native speakers of the foreign language. Nor is it appropriate to use the performance of SL or FL learners of the language as a criteria to decide about the pragmatic rules of that certain language. In this case it might be a good idea for one to use the written documents of the native speakers of the language in order to get to know about their specific pragmatic and politeness rules in order to maintain harmonious and respectful speech when interacting with them. In other words, in the absence of enough contexts and the lack of opportunity to travel to the country that speaks the language the learner intends to learn, it is recommended to compare the literary works written by native speakers of the two languages. Since the culture of a person is either consciously or unconsciously embedded in his way of writing, studying these culture-revealing works of the authors and comparing the situations and the actions of the characters will help the researchers, teachers and specially the learners to raise their awareness of the pragmatic rules underlying each.

Consequently, being aware of these principles will help the learners of the language to communicate and interact with others, mostly the native speakers of the language being learnt, without any misinterpretation that may probably lead to communication breakdowns. Therefore, language pedagogy should attempt to increase the cross-cultural awareness of learners and improve their pragmatic competence by paying close attention to some of the pragmatic features of their native and target language by comparing the two, so as to show different treatment of the same feature in two languages.

An attempt will be made in the present study study to investigate and compare the use of different types of refusal identified using the taxonomy of Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990) and employment of Brown and Levinson's (1987) face saving strategies to mitigate its threatening effects by different characters with different power relations in English and Farsi novels. This is mostly done due to the fact that the previously conducted researches mostly focus on obtained and elicited data; however, the focus of the present study is on the naturally occurring stream of speech.

The research questions addressed in this study are as following:

RQ1:   What refusal strategies are mostly employed in English and Farsi novels?

RQ2:   What types of refusal the characters with different power relations mostly use in English and Farsi novels?

RQ3:   What politeness strategies do the characters in both languages employ in order to soften the impact of the speech act on the interlocutors' face?

RQ4:   To what extend the differences in the culture of each language (in terms of being individualist or collectivist) are reflected on the employment of politeness strategies by characters in the novels?

The result of this, if done properly, will lead to some understandings about the differences or similarities of the two languages in terms of the performance of their native speakers in expressing this speech act, their choice of politeness strategies and generally pragmatic rules when confronting with people of different and even equal power status, and finally to the fact that whether these similarities or differences can be explained by the cultural differences or not.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Theoretical Background

Pragmatics is a very important and crucial term in the study of the processes involved in the communication of speech. It deals with the factors that influence the production and perception of speech, specially the cultural and situational factors since the perception and the inference of the speech is different in different contexts. It is defined by Yule (1996) as "the study of the relationships between linguistic forms and the users of those forms" (p. 4). He outlines four defining principles for the issue of pragmatics. Pragmatics, according to him, is the study of: a) speaker meaning, b) contextual meaning, c) how more gets communicated than is said, and d) the expression of relative distance. He states that "pragmatics is appealing because it's about how people make sense of each other linguistically, but it can be frustrating area of study because it requires us to make sense of people and what they have in mind." (p. 4)

Speech act theory which is an important and crucial theory in the branch of pragmatics was first proposed by Austin (1962) in his famous work, *How to do things with words*. In his work, Austin outlines his Theory of Speech Acts and the concept of performative language, in which he states that by the help of language, one not only says things, but also does things. When there is a direct and one-to-one relationship between the sentence type and the intended meaning of the utterance, the speech act is said to be a direct speech act. However, there are some cases when there is no direct or one-to-one relationship between the sentence type and the meaning it intends to convey. In that case, the speech act uttered is an indirect speech act which was first proposed by Searle (1976). The indirect speech acts are mostly produced due to the fact that uttering them directly might make the speaker seem rude, inconsiderate and impolite. The proposal of indirect speech acts lead to another important theory related to pragmatics. Theory of politeness.

The issue of politeness is an outstanding concept under the umbrella of pragmatics and its history goes back to at least the sixteenth century (Eelen, 2014). Every person, possessing a certain culture, follows certain culture-specific rules for behaving respectfully and appropriately in order to avoid being disrespectful and rude, avoid conflicts, and maintain a peace-

ful and harmonious conversation. These rules, or better say polite behaviors, can either be verbal expressions, nonverbal behaviors or a combination of both. They can be a matter of strategic choice or social convention. Being a culture-specifi phenomena, what is considered as polite in one cultural context, might be interpreted as strange or even rude in the other. Defining it in more specific terms, Yule (1996) states that politeness in an interaction, can then be defined as the means employed to show awareness of another person's *face*.

There are several theories and pragmatic approaches to the issue of politeness which began to appear in the mid-1970s (Lakoff, 1973; Fraser and Nolen, 1981; Leech, 1983; Arndt and Janney, 1985; Brown and Levinson, 1987; Ide, 1989; Gu, 1990; Blum-Kulka, 1987, 1990, 1992; and Watts, 2003). According to Eelen (2014), since the politeness has to do with the language, and more specifically with the language use, which is the main concern of pragmatics, and social world, which is an outstanding issue in the field of sociolinguistics, all the theories regarding the issue of politeness, deal with either of the two subfields in one way or the other. Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) theory of face and face-threatening acts (FTAs) are considered one of the most notable theories of politeness. In their politeness theory, Brown and Levinson (1987) introduce the concept of 'face', which is one's image of self and was first proposed by Goffman (1967) (although their view of the concept of face is different from that of Goffman). They distinguish two types of face: negative face and positive face.

According to Yule (1996, p. 62), "A person's positive face is the need to be accepted, even liked, by others, to be treated as a member of the same group, and to know that his or her wants are shared by others". Negative face, on the other hand is "the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, right to nondistraction – i.e., to freedom from imposition", and "[…] the want of every 'competent adult member' that his action be unimpeded by others" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, pp. 61-62). Any act which damages the face of the addressee or the speaker by acting in opposition to the wants and desires of the other is named by Brown and Levinson (1987) as a Face Threatening Act (FTA). The speech act of refusal which is the main concern of the present paper is also a face threatening act. It is a type of speech act that damages the listener's face by seeming rude and impolite. By refusing, one says no to the request made by the opposite side and similarly damages his/her desire to be accepted and respected by others. The threatening effect of refusal might be more obvious when there is power inconsistency among the interlocutors. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), there are three sociocultural variables for evaluating the weightiness of different face threatening acts (FTAs): 1) Social Distance (D) (whether the interlocutors are close, such as kin, friends, family members, etc., or strangers), 2) Power (P) (the power the speaker/hearer has over the hearer/speaker), and 3) Rank (R) (how threatening or imposing a speech act might be). Therefore, by taking into consideration the social distance and the power relations of the interlocutors, it is better to mitigate the threatening effect it might have on the listener by using it indirectly and in more polite ways.

Like other speech acts, refusal is also considered differently in different cultures and should be used with cautious in new contexts. This can easily be done by investigating the use of this speech act in different languages in order to examine the effect of their different cultures in the choice of refusal types and politeness strategies.

A number of studies are carried out regarding the use of the speech act of refusal in relation to power status of the interlocutors in which the participants are mostly EFL or ESL learners (Morkus, 2009; Allami and Naeimi, 2011; Vaezi, 2011; Tamimi Sa'd and Qadermazi, 2014; Kazemi Gol, 2013; and etc.) or the comparative studies which compare the production of this speech act by the speakers of different languages (Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz, 1990; Lin, 2014; Tsuiki Moaveni, 2014; Kwon, 2004; Kazemi Gol, 2013; etc.).

Studies on the Iranian EFL Learners' use of Refusal

A study by Allami and Naeimi (2011) investigated the refusal strategies of Iranian EFL learners in comparison to the American refusals. The subjects of the study were 30 Iranian English learners and 31 native speakers of Farsi. All were male undergraduate students that aged between 16 to 29 years. The data for the American group were borrowed from Kwon (2004). A written DCT adopted from Beebe et al. (1990) with a slight modification was used. The study showed that both Farsi speakers and Iranian EFL learners used variety of indirect strategies and more excuses and reasons than Americans; however, in contrast to the Americans, they used less clear or concrete reasons or excuses. They also frequently expressed positive opinions like the Americans, but did not offer any alternative plans as the Americans did. The upper-intermediate level students used condition-setting statements which were never used by the Americans. Another major finding of this study was that both Iranian groups chose strategies based on the interlocutor's relative social status. They also found that the more proficient the learners became, the more pragmatic transfer occurred.

Vaezi (2011) carried out a study in which the similarities and differences in refusing between Persian learners of English as a foreign language and Persian native speakers in Iran were investigated. The data was gathered from 30 students in Iran by the use of Discourse Completion Test (DCT), typical communication, and role play. Findings show that Persian native speakers tried to use indirect reasons when refusing in order not to annoy the opposite part while EFL learners used more direct strategies and expressed their refusals more frankly. It was also found that, social distance and power play an important role in production of refusal by Persian native speakers.

Kazemi Gol (2013), also conducted a contrastive study about the speech act of refusal produced by Iranian ESL learners who have been in the US for at least one year and therefore are to some extent familiar with the target language culture and native English speaking (NES) Americans. The data were gathered using role play scenario consisting of requests, suggestions, invitations, and offers. Data were coded based on "The classification of illocutionary acts" by

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Searle (1976). Statistical analysis revealed that Iranian ESL learners used almost equal illocutionary acts for expressing, initiating and finalizing refusals for the four acts of requests, suggestions, invitations, and offers regarding the social status of interlocutors and their social distance. As mentioned in the article, the results would be different for EFL learners who have not mastered the pragmatic competence of the native speakers of English.

In their study, Tamimi Sa'd and Qadermazi (2014) examined the effect of exposure to English on the use of refusal strategies among EFL learners in comparison to those of non-English learners when refusing in their native language, here Persian. The data were elicited from 12EFL learners and 12 learners of other academic majors including electronics, psychology, management, etc., who responded to a Persian Discourse Completion Task (DCT). The responses were coded according to the classification of refusal strategies which were outlined by Beebe, Tahakashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990). According to the results, non-English learners used the refusal strategies considerably more frequently than the EFL learners while the EFL learners applied more adjuncts to refusals than the non-English learners. The difference in the use of adjuncts; however, was not very significant. 'Non-performative statement', 'Statement of regret', 'Excuse, reason or explanation' and 'Attempt to dissuade interlocutor' were the four most frequently used refusal strategies by both groups and' Statement of positive opinions, feelings or agreement' and 'Gratitude/Appreciation' were the most frequently used adjuncts by the two. Moreover, gender difference was not also a significant factor influencing the results in this study. Generally stated, the pragmatic effects of the L2, might not be so significantly obvious and present in L1

Tabatabaei (2014), in another study, investigated English and Persian university students' behaviors in refusing the invitation. The data were gathered from 30 English and 30 Persian speakers. A discourse completion task (DCT) in which they had to refuse the invitation of interlocutor was administered to the participants. The findings were analyzed using the taxonomy of refusal strategies which was proposed by Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz's (1990). As the results indicated, the participants of the two groups tended to use indirect strategies more than direct ones in refusing the invitation of interlocutors. The most frequently used strategies by both English and Persian native speakers were reason, regret and appreciation. The findings of the study revealed that there are similarities between the two groups in using refusal strategies, so as a result this might suggest that there won't be any significant pragmatic problems between English and Persian native speakers when refusing.

In their paper, Hosseini and Talebinezhad (2014) investigated the perception of native speakers of Persian, Iranian EFL learners, and native speakers of English of how they would make refusals in different situations. A discourse completion test (DCT) consisting of three requests, three invitations, three suggestions, and three offers which was in the form of a questionnaire was used to elicit information from participants. The responses were compared with non-native speakers' responses to determine which semantic

formulas and refusal strategies were used. A chi-square test was used as data analysis instrument. The results showed some significan differences among the participants (ENS, PNS, and EFLL) of the study in using refusals strategies. For example, Persian native speakers and EFL learners tended to express refusals with more caution care than American native speakers. The results also showed a significance difference between social status and gender of people and their directness and indirectness in making refusals. For example, females' used direct refusals less frequently than males.

Studies on the use of Refusal by English Learners of Other Languages

Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990), in their article, compared the refusals to a higher-, equal-, and lower-status interlocutors produced by native speakers of Japanese and native speakers of English. The participants of the study were 20 Japanese speaking in Japanese, 20 Japanese speaking in English, and 20 Americans speaking in English. Their data collection instrument was a Discourse Completion Test (DCT). The results represented that the performance of Japanese speakers of English and native speakers differ in the order of the semantic formula, the frequency of the formula, and the content of the utterances. There were also differences in the realization of the status of the interlocutors by respondents. Japanese learners were mostly conscious of the status difference in interactions, they used direct strategies with interlocutors of lower status and used indirect and more polite strategies when refusing with the interlocutors with higher status. The Americans on the other hand, denied such differences.

In another research, Kwon (2004) compares the expression of refusal in Korean and American English. The data were collected from 40 Korean speakers in Korea and 37 American English speakers in America. In order to elicit data, a DCT taken from Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990) was used. Data were analyzed based on semantic formula and categorized according to the classification of refusals by Beebe et al. (1990). Results showed a similar range in the use of refusal strategies by the two language groups, but showing cross-cultural variation in the frequency and content of semantic formulas used by each language group regarding the status of interlocutors and eliciting acts. As an example, Korean speakers used direct strategies less frequently than English speakers. While English speakers often expressed positive opinions and gratitude for a proposed action, Koreans frequently paused and apologized before refusing. Furthermore, Korean speakers were more sensitive to status differences and used more polite and mitigating strategies when they wanted to refuse high-status person but this wasn't true about English speakers. As Kwon (2004) noted in her paper, these differences in Korean and English refusals may cause pragmatic failure when Korean learners of English rely on their native culture-specific refusal strategies in interacting with native English speakers.

In his study, Lin (2014) examined the cross-cultural differences between Chinese and English refusals, and how Chinese EFL learners perceive and perform the speech act of

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 from16 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 fi ures 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 categoriezed 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 fi ures, 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

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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
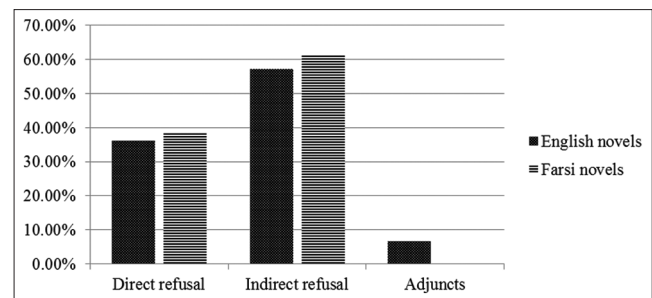

Figure 1. Types of refusal used in English and Farsi novels

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 fi ure, '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-
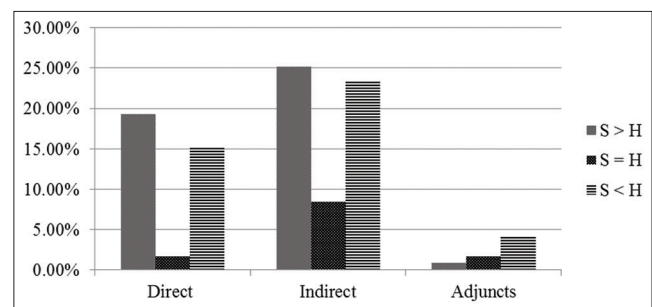

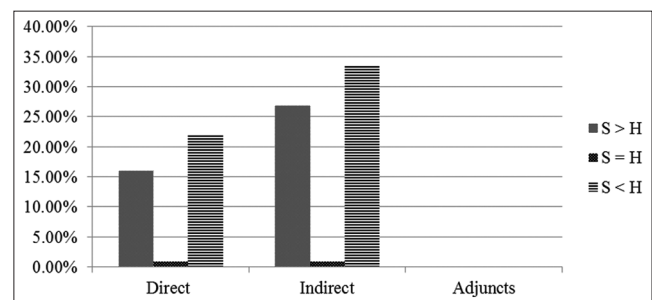**Figure 2.** Types of refusal used by characters with different power relations in the English novels

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

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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 fi ure 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 fi ure, 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)	-

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

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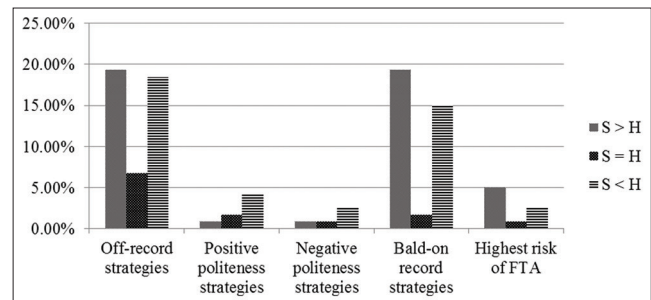
the latter is not very high at all, in comparison to the first. In general, and by referring to Figure 4, off-record strategies were the most dominantly used strategies in English novels; however, both off-record and bald-on record strategies were used equally by characters with higher power status.

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-

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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

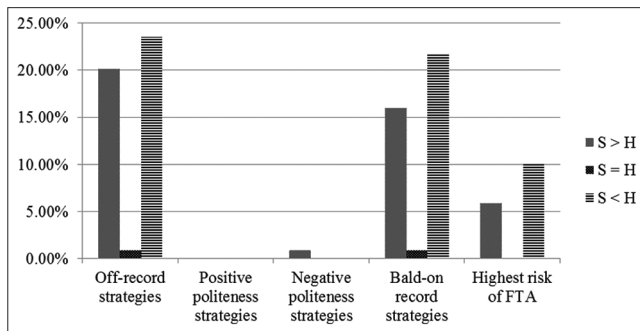| Power relations	Politeness strategies				
	Off-record strategies (%)	Positive politeness strategies	Negative politeness strategies (%)	Bald-on record strategies (%)	Highest risk of FTA (%)
S>H	24 (20.16)	-	1 (0.84)	19 (15.96)	7 (5.88)
S=H	1 (0.84)	-	-	1 (0.84)	-
S<H	28 (23.52)	-	-	26 (21.84)	12 (10.08)

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 Mezuláník (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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